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THE
SOLDIER'S DESTINY.

A Tale of the Times.

TO WHICH IS ADDED

THE SCRABSTER FAMILY.

A DOMESTIC SKETCH.

BY GEORGE WALLER.

LONDON,
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THE SOLDIER'S DESTINY.

THE ENLISTMENT.

IN the year 1830, when Nature had arrayed herself in her annual garb of the many-hued autumn, on a particular morning of September, the sun rose brilliantly to cheer the hearts of the holiday-makers in Alstonfield, a rude and rural village in the agricultural district of Staffordshire, which history seemed long ago to have left unnoticed and unknown. But though no chronicles of Alstonfield exist, and though it has no archives, the touching record of this paper and the published wrongs of its simple hero, shall excite a sympathy in human hearts, and henceforth establish for Alstonfield a glorious renown as the birth-place of a martyr. A martyr! Every thing created of God has its effect, and every thing made by man has *its* effect. How terrible seems the reflection on human errors! What thousands and tens of thousands of martyrs does every atom of Truth demand to establish itself in the world! How many victims did Paganism require before it would relinquish its firm hold upon the minds of men in favour of Christianity. How many victims will Christianity itself sacrifice

before its sectarian prejudices and worldly vices shall be cast off, and it shall stand forward in its purity to be the worship of the world? How many victims will War yet require to be slaughtered like wild beasts of prey,—to be murdered in the open face of day, ere she will abdicate her gory throne, and branded fly—pursued by her own vile creatures, the wolf and the vulture—leaving the earth at last to the pure and mild dominion of sweet peace? Oh! Heaven hasten this desired empire, and bless the intentions to promote it!

The particular morning above mentioned, on which the sun had risen brilliantly to cheer their hearts, was in turn welcomed by the holiday-makers of Alstonfield, and the holiday-makers consisted of nearly the whole population. The occasion was the annual wake, which, at the time of our story, was still kept up, with many of the ancient honours appertaining to such festivals. The donkey-racing—the sack-racing—the single stick—wrestling, and that particularly noble, stupid British amusement of boxing, were all prosecuted with an ardour worthy of the middle ages, or a better cause. And on this day, it was expected that the feats of every performer would at least equal, and most probably excel, anything that had preceded the present wake.

The donkey-race was to be the great event of the day, and much was said through the village upon the merits of the various animals that were to kick, *plunge* and run, and were to be kicked and beaten in

the contest for the stakes of £5. The two favourites of the day seemed to be the steeds of Nat Willet and Joe Caplin, and these two champions for lucre and for village-fame, it is necessary that we should know something of before proceeding further.

Joe then was a fair, intelligent, and well-grown young man of six-and-twenty—an honest and simple rustic, with a good word and a smile always at command. He was rather courted among his associates as a shrewd, hard-working, well-meaning fellow. He had at home an old widowed mother, whom he kept as well as he could, in addition to a good-hearted wife, and two little ones who all loved him very dearly. He had married before his father's death, and started as fairly in life as a young man could ; that is, he had able hands, a willing heart, and a loving wife, to help him through a world of trouble. With few wants and contented minds, his wife and he could not but be happy ; in time, however, there had come an innocent intruder to call upon them for a little more work and a little more self-denial ; then brother John had had a long family and bad health, and they had taken a nephew to add to their family and their cares. Then father had died, and mother must go to the union ; Joe couldn't bear that, nor his wife either, so mother had come and divided their already scanty stock with them ; and soon after all these occurrences there appeared another little trouble in the form of a second baby, and Joe had very hard work indeed to make both ends meet, and lately had begun to look a

little care-worn and anxious, for wages were low and work was uncertain. On wet days they were all as much obliged to eat and drink as on fine days, but there was no work to do on the wet days, and when many of them came together it made Joe look very thoughtful indeed. The present week, however, of which the particular day was Friday, had thrown a new life upon the features of Joe, for he had succeeded in gaining a prize at the County Agricultural Society's Meeting, for the cleanest and neatest cottage in the parish, thanks to the good housewifery of Lizzy his wife, and the help of his well-experienced old mother. This prize had put them all in good spirits, for it seemed really like a good omen that such luck should begin the week in which fell the junior Joe's fifth birth-day, as well as the wake the day after, upon which last occasion, Joe the elder had agreed, for the consideration of a few shillings, to ride one of the contending donkeys for the Alstonfield sweepstakes.

This donkey-riding, which Joe had in the first instance undertaken for the little consideration it would put in his pocket, had not altogether pleased the women of Joe's household, but they had kept their misgivings to themselves, and after the improved condition of Joe's spirits, they could not but agree at their frugal meal on the wake morning, in Joe's opinion that his luck seemed all at once to have taken a turn, and he was sure he should win the race, because Good Fortune, having just begun to notice him, *had put this race in his way on purpose to help him.*

It was with such an opinion, and with the confidence of a winner, that Joe walked down to the village-green—the impromptu race-course of the day, to receive the encouragements of his friends and backers, and alas ! never to dream of the malignant nature of the Good Fortune who had just taken him under her care !

Nat Willet, the chief antagonist of Joe, was a very different character. The son of poor people who had neither time nor funds to devote to his training, Nat had grown up shoeless and hatless in the village ; seldom fed and always hungry, he had learned to cheat his playfellows of the street and the gutter, out of hunks of bread, or tempting bones, great delicacies to him, and he suffered the various chastisements he often had to endure more as a payment in kind for his luxuries, than as a retribution for wrong doing. What wonder that such a lad should have grown up a lazy and doubtful character ! What wonder that the education of his childhood should have formed the character of his manhood ! What wonder that at five-and-forty years Nat should be a systematic poacher, an ale-house gambler, and a man ready to any one's money for any sort of job, delicate or not, honest or otherwise !

Nat's head-quarters were at Alstonfield, and when possible he made a point of assisting at its wake, that being an occasion on which he was sure to make some money. At other times he wandered about the county. A drover on market-days, a horse-

dealer on fair days, an idler on Sundays, a sharp man on all days, and a poacher at night, Nat was a man who knew something of life. A friend of gipsies, and an intimate acquaintance with many bad characters of the county, whom he had met during a toilsome residence in the county jail on one or two occasions, Nat was an antagonist by no means despicable, for he was well known to be a man who would stick at nothing to accomplish his purposes. He rode a donkey of his own, about the honest acquirement of which the village gossips had had their grave doubts, but which was still his own to beat and to work as he pleased, and it was with all faith in him and confidence in the result that Nat too had walked upon the ground.

The competitors were all arrived, and busied in their preparations. The village was enlivened by the ingress of lads and lasses from the neighbouring farms and hamlets, induced by the fineness of the day to come to Alstonfield and have a jig upon the green. The steeple of the church had hoisted its holiday flag, and the belfry had pealed forth a happy bob-major in commemoration of the event. The village inn had raised an enormous flag-pole, and decked the string of it with banners of all nations. Two or three booths for dancing and drinking had been erected on the green, barrels of beer were being tapped preparatorily to being emptied, the shows were bustling to commence operations, and the *wandering minstrel*, who never knew any other tune

upon his broken-winded clarionette than "The Devil among the Tailors," was taking a last bit and a sup before taking a *blow*, which once begun, would last till late in the day.

The pause of expectation before the commencement of the revels was interrupted by the sounds of music,—music of artful and inspiring kind—the fife and drum! The music of glory and of blood! Sounds hollow as the instruments that make them! These sounds approached, announcing to the simple and happy revellers the advent of soldiers out recruiting men. Soldiers in the gaudy livery of blood, marshalled by music, searching for men whom they could lure or entrap, by flattering prospects or knavish artifices, to serve their country and murder her enemies!

This new arrival brought unbounded delight to all the little boys and girls, who saw only the show of the outside, and heard only pretty music. It brought joy to the maidens who were there, for they rather liked the looks, and the stories, and the spirited flirtations of a soldier, and they promised themselves an extra dance and a terrible devotion to the red-coat, for no other purpose than to vex their more simple swains, whom they could manage as they pleased. So the music played, and the men marched, and their triumphal course round the green was ended at the inn, the head-quarters of the day, and then commenced the merry-makings and their work.

The contests of the morning seemed to go off with

an immense spirit. Sergeant Spurdon and Corporal Tintly, were every where exciting fire and animation in all bosoms ; they encouraged the conquerors—cheered the vanquished, and made friends of all the fine young men about. They backed everybody, and when the contest was over, they always knew that the winner would win. There was a charm and fascination about their society, which greatly attracted the simple countrymen, who knew but little of guile and hypocrisy, and less of glory and the destiny of a soldier. Sergeant Spurdon was at once a popular man in the village, the father of glory and the brother of honour, and when he complimented Joe upon the animal he was going to ride, there was a universal buzz of satisfaction amongst the crowd, and from that moment they set down the race as won.

But the excitement was no whit the less, when twelve o'clock struck from the village spire and warned them of the time to start. The saddling and mounting accomplished, away went all the donkeys that would go, and stubborn were the donkeys that would not. One man was thrown over the head, another over the tail of a donkey. But the kicks of the riders and the ridden—the attempts to win—the constant misunderstanding between the asses of riders and the riders' asses—the thumps that the donkey suffered, or the disappointment that the loser suffered, need not be told. They are better left to the imagination of the reader. It is enough that Joe *Caplin* was declared the winner of the stakes, and

that Sergeant Spurdon, and then the Corporal, were the first to congratulate Joe, and to shake him warmly by the hand. After running the gauntlet of his friends' applause, Joe was invited with three or four others by these military heroes, to have something to drink with them, and Joe, honoured by the invitation, and thirsty from excitement and hard work, did drink. They sat down upon some benches at the entrance to one of the tents, and listened to the tales of war and glory which the sergeant told and the corporal confirmed, whilst Joe and his friends innocently drunk the beer which the sergeant in the handsomest manner kept calling for and paying for.

The excitement of the day and the drink, could not fail to have their effect, and the sergeant was well practised in his business. He was the servant of the government, whose livery he wore, and whose money he was authorized to spend in making soldiers. His simple instructions were to get men for the army, the means of accomplishment were left to himself. He knew the difficulty of his undertaking, but his necessity was success, and to gain that he had learnt to make his government connive at means to get recruits which reflected sadly on honesty, if not on honour. These means are drinking and deception !

"Ha !" said he, at the conclusion of one of his most telling anecdotes, "that's glory for you — that's a soldier's life. Eating and drinking when there's no fighting, and when there is, lots of plunder and booty. Why there was a man in our regiment, that I knew

very well when we were in France, who made so much money that, after Waterloo, he retired from the army and kept his carriage. The corporal knew him very well, didn't you, Tintly?"

"Oh! yes," replied the corporal, "most intimately; he used often to ask me to dinner after he was well off."

"Well now," said the sergeant, "look here just one minute. Here's a fine lot of young fellows like you live and die in your nasty dirty village, and know nothing of the world, and never get rich only because you're afraid to take a bold step. There isn't a man among you but what would enjoy our life immensely, if you only dare try it. You do as you like, and think as you like, get rich and get promoted, and become in fact tip-top gentlemen." Such words he knew would work upon his simple listeners, and cautiously they began to think upon the glorious prospects he had shown to them as so easy of attainment. The dance went on upon the green below them; merry and light-hearted figures tripped on nimble feet to the hoarse wood notes of the minstrel. The more sober of the people were walking round to see the fun, and Nat Willet was sulkily taking his way to the ale-house with a pipe in his mouth, to console himself for the disappointment of the day, and to make up if possible in some other way for his ill luck in the race. A neighbour of Joe's was walking over the green with his wife, *and they had picked up on their road Joe's son, who*

was looking after his father. But the group with the sergeant were too much engaged to notice anything or anybody about them, and so stolid did the lads appear—so fearful of leaving their village to penetrate into the depths of the world beyond it—that it seemed rather doubtful whether all the sergeant's fine talking hadn't been thrown away, when Joe suddenly jumped from his form and said,—“Well, lads, I'll go.” The corporal was down like a shot upon him, the sergeant applauded most vociferously, and his friends were gazing, half in admiration and half in surprise, at the daring of the deed. “There's the king's shilling for you, my fine fellow,” said the corporal, “and now give us your hat, and we'll stick the ribbons of glory in it.” The ribbons were pinning, the sergeant was laughing,—“Bravo ! bravo ! you're the bravest fellow in the place. The bravest man in the village, by Jove !” said he, lifting his hand, “there's an example for you, lads—there's an example.” The ribbons were pinning on the hat, Joe with one hand was pocketing the shilling, with the other raising the pot to drink success to his new career, when his son, who had espied him, came running up, and caught hold of his dress, to be sure of his lost father, whilst he looked round for his protectors. Nat Willet, who was at this moment crossing their path, observed with great satisfaction that the smile of drunken Joe at this slight touch of his little son changed sick and ghastly, and he went on well pleased. But Joe daren't quail thus soon. That

thump of remorse upon his heart at the touch of his son was deadened by the liquor, and at present he dared not get sober lest it should be renewed. Incautious drinking had made him a soldier ; and now he must drink on to forget what he had done ; and he did. But while consciousness lasted, it was with a hollow heart that he sung and laughed, that he talked and joked with his fellows. His example was not lost. He was not the only victim. The sergeant slept that night satisfied with his success. Nat Willet was as pleased as though he had won the donkey-race. The holiday people dispersed, and the wake was over.

But that day's happiness was not universal. Homes were made dreary, and hearts were made sad by the visit of the red-coats. The fife and the drum, and the widow's scalding tears—the bright bayonet and the mother's sigh of desolation—the sharp-edged sword and the sister's wail of sorrow—these are the harmonies of glory and of war !

Such harmonies as these were the fruits of the village wake !

LEAVING HOME.

WHAT a stern task-master is society ! Obedience to its laws is the work of a life, their infringement the impulse of a moment ! What a hard exchange it seems to have a life's misery for a moment's folly ! Yet this alone will work regeneration in the world. Virtue or vice, reward or punishment, wisdom or folly, God or the world !—man is free to choose his path, and though that path is darkened in the clouds of futurity, Destiny knows the way, and Destiny is his guide ! The path itself is easy enough to travel, be the will but strong enough to follow our blind guide through good report and evil report, through perils and through watchings. The difficulties are in our inclination to wander from the road so constantly. The traveller must walk alone, and if he talk it must be but to give or to gain encouragement on his journey. He must listen to no voice of seduction from the tempting bowers of folly on his right hand or his left. The path of right and duty chosen, he must not waver in his determination to follow it to the end. Does he sigh for change, for rest, for a shorter road ? The still small voice of conscience and of Destiny whispers peril and danger in the ear of his heart ! The path chosen, Destiny will surely guide the traveller to the right goal, and the journey

will be easy or difficult, short or long, according to the heartiness with which the guide is followed to her inevitable end.

Poor Joe ! how should we weep thy bitter fate ! Thy heart was virtuous, but thy virtue was simplicity, and the simplicity of ignorance ; weak before the battery of educated sophistry ! Thou wert happy in thy toil and in thy hardships—thou wert blessed in thy poverty and struggles ; for the still small voice would often whisper in thy heart, “All right !” Thou wert tempted and untaught, but thou didst hear a still alarm beaten at thy heart, and thou didst slight the warning whisper ! Thy destiny did counsel thee, Joe, but thou wouldst not listen, and thou art fallen,—step by step, quickly, irretrievably fallen in the toils that were laid for thee ! It is thy better informed and more cunning fellow-men who have ensnared thee to sin against the morality of society, and who now hasten to heap the chains of punishment upon thy sad self ! They shall have their reward ! Thou shalt face them Joe at a tribunal of heart-justice, and it will be for thee to accuse and punish in thy turn ! The sands of time fall quickly, but the young plant of truth begins to grow apace, and as the mustard seed, ere long it shall fill the earth like a mighty tree !

Poor Joe was a soldier, and a miserable man for life. No sooner was the mad rashness committed than he repented in his soul. The conscience whisper in his heart grew loud and terrible enough to make him feel

his folly even in his drunkenness ; but the rashness was committed now—his fate irrevocable—and Joe had nothing left but to meet that fate with firmness, and stifle the hitherto protector of his heart. Some good friend took charge of his son, and saw him safely lodged at home. Joe drank,—drank on, but could not lose himself. The more he drank, the more horrible became his vague terror, yet he only knew what he was leaving, he could not know what awaited him ; but Destiny still kept sounding the tocsin in his heart, and would not let him rest. He wandered from the village into the fields, and he laid down under a hedge and slept. But his sleep was no rest, and his dreams haunted him for ever after. He dreamt that for a moment he was happier than ever in his home—the faces of his family were brighter and the laugh of innocence was ringing from his glad hearth, when, in a moment, the light was blackness, and with a horrible and overwhelming crash, his house fell upon them all in death. One shriek of agony and despair passed like a sharp sword through his heart on its way to heaven, and he was struggling from the dead-house of his children. He gasped in agony as he saw beside him a misery-stricken phantom like his wife, who, with a ghastly smile borrowed from the grave, looked tearfully upon him ; and when in an earnest, sigh-broken voice, she seemed to say, “ Dear Joe live in hope of better times,” he fairly started at once into a sitting posture, wide awake and sober. He tried to think of what he ought to

do. He thought of the knife in his pocket—of the river and the tree—but then he thought of his wife and his mother, and his dear dear children, and he had no courage to meet death. He thought of his sin, and decided to live for repentance. He thought of his dream, and then doubted if it were not better to shun such a frightful fate as to see all whom he loved die, or whether he should prevent it by himself first dying. But then if he were dead, what would become of them all, and what would become of them as it was? The thought was madness. He raved, he called for death to seal the darkness of that night for ever! His bleeding heart, so torn by grief, gave to his mouth groans that almost choked him, and to his eyes tears that burnt their lids, and streamed like boiling lava down his face. Long did he weep the bitter tears of a too late repentance. But even tears brought relief, and when at last they ceased, the violence of his paroxysm had gushed forth with them; the very excess of his grief soon caused reaction and composure, so that he gained sufficient self-command, to resolve that with the peep of day, he would go home and tell to his dear wife the story of their woes. Whilst reflecting how he should break the sad news in the gentlest way, he fell into a sound sleep. It was a support and refreshment he much needed after the terrible day he had spent.

He woke about six o'clock in the morning, though bodily perhaps better, yet far from recovered. His limbs were stiff with cold, whilst his skin was parched

and feverish. A throbbing head, a dry mouth and a trembling hand, still told the tale of the previous day. Sleeping in his clothes and in the cold air of an autumn night, had not improved his looks, while the consciousness of his unusually disordered appearance, and the fear of meeting a neighbour who might remind him of his folly, made Joe shrink from walking through the village to his home. He was obliged, to avoid such a necessity, to make a considerable circuit in the fields, which occupied some time, and it was past seven when he had come sufficiently near to catch a glimpse of his home.

And at the first sight of it, his heart began to thump so hard and his breath seemed so difficult to draw, while he trembled so terribly, that he had almost turned again and fled. But a moment's pause gave him a little courage, and slowly he managed to drag himself to his own door. One moment's hesitation on the latch, another to slide in, and then his wife and he, wrapt in a convulsive embrace, were bathing in each other's tears.

They were all there, and in a moment they were all sobbing a silent thanksgiving for poor Joe's return. For a long time words were too painful to utter; they would have broken a charm which seemed to bind them all. But the tears did cease at length, and then poor Joe began to tell the story of his fate, it nearly choked him though, and he had to stop very often to gulp down a great lump that would keep pushing up his throat.

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comfortably for some little while till I can turn round and get settled a bit. What do you think mother?"

"Well, I think, perhaps, that would be the best way," said the old woman.

"But if you were to be ill, Joe, or anything was to happen, I should never forgive myself for letting you go alone," remonstrated Lizzy.

At this moment the music of the fife and drum was heard without, and alarmed them all.

"Why they're coming to fetch you already," said Lizzy, "Oh! if they should forget that you had 'listed yesterday, and go away without you."

But they were not the men to forget. The talons of glory once touching a victim, he is not forgotten—he is not left till dead, or worn out and unfit for use.

Lizzy's vague hope was hardly uttered, ere a sharp tap upon the door, and its immediate opening, brought Tintly down the steps, who brusquely said as he walked in, "Joseph Caplin." Joe turned round, and meeting the cold gaze of the soldier, was immediately recognized by him with—"Now then my fine fellow, are you ready for starting?"

"Oh! no, sir, Joe's not ready yet," said Lizzy meekly, "he's had no breakfast yet, sir."

"Can't help that," replied the corporal, "there's no time for breakfast now, we must be marching."

"Oh! but, sir, it is so sudden, I hope you'll give Joe a little time to get ready, sir."

"Duty, my dear, Joe's a soldier now and he'll have to obey orders. He'll have to learn duty," and the corporal turning rather impatiently to Joe, con-

tinued in a peremptory tone, "I can't stay talking here, so say good bye at once and come along."

"I'm ready," said Joe resignedly, and he left his seat and kissed the baby in his mother's arms, he warmly shook her old withered hand, he kissed her moistened cheek. "God bless you mother,—pray for me and take care of my little ones for me." "God bless you Billy," said he, kissing his nephew, "be a good boy to aunt and granny, and take care of them like a man."

The little fellow said "Yes," and wondered what it all meant. Granny buried her face in her rough old hands to shut from her eyes poor Lizzy's agony, whilst she and her dear Joe kissed and wept their sad farewell in warm embraces. As he turned at last to go, Lizzy still clung to him, one hand upon his shoulder, the other locked in his, she looked through her tears upon her son, who having seen preparations for departure, had got his mother's bonnet, but when his father turned, the child threw down the bonnet and ran to claim his kiss.

The corporal grew impatient. "Come," said he, slapping Joe sharply on the shoulder, "Be a man, you've had enough of this. Look there's the sergeant and your friends waiting for you," and he pointed to the group which could be seen through the open door-way. "Lord bless you," pursued he, "you'll be as happy as a king to-morrow. Come look alive now. You mustn't stop crying here like a nincompoop—now, come along, come!"

Joe kissed his son, and again kissed his dear Lizzy, *and a moment after he was gone.*

THE DESERTER.

It was with a heavy heart that Joe joined his quondam friends of the form yesterday outside, and the journey to their first destination was performed in cheerless silence, for Joe's friends did not seem in much lighter spirits than himself. This destination was Ashbourne, a distance from Alstonfield of but a few miles, the district depôt of the recruiting service for the eighth regiment of foot. Arrived here, it was not long before Joe had a taste of military humiliation, in a visit for examination to the surgeon. The humiliation by which he had been trapped into the service was but the preparative for the life that was to follow. That life had now commenced, and the medical examination was the first step therein.

There were three candidates, and they were before the surgeon and the sergeant. They had to strip, and they severally underwent the tapping and the probing, and the poking of the surgeon's fingers, and the ordeal of an interrogatory as to their habits and previous manner of life, blushing the while the deep crimson of shame, at an exposure which, in a civilized and well-regulated mind, is insult and indignity, because it is unnecessary.

This examination by the surgeon, is to enable the military officials of the government to judge whether

the man is a *bargain* at a shilling a-day, and can be likened only to the examination that a butcher or a horse-dealer would be required to make by a gentleman, before his purchase of a fat sheep or a useful hack.

This act of initiation over, and Joe pronounced a safe investment, he was not many days before he found himself in Derby, at head-quarters, and under the active superintendence of the drill-corporal. His time was pretty well occupied in learning the mysteries of right faces and left faces, left half-faces and right about faces, right and left shoulders forward, marchings, quick marchings, and double quick marchings, dressings by the right or left, forming two deep, taking open order, making eschalon movements, advancing by files or in lines, forming squares, and the sundry other scientific manœuvres of the field; but with all his employment he often thought of Lizzy and the children at home. Barrack life was new to him, and not at all to his taste. He had been used to the simple society of his fellows at home, or the affection of his family, and here he was forced into the companionship of vicious and profane men. The rooms were common to the drunkard and the swearer, as they were to the sober and virtuous. Husbands and wives undressed and slept in the same room with others. Decency was outraged, morality almost scorned, and Joe loved his wife too well to think for a moment of submitting her to such trials, *if they could possibly be avoided*. He often wrote

letters in his spare hours to comfort all at home, and to enclose the scanty pittance he could save to supply their wants. He told of the wretchedness of his company, and the depravity in a barrack, to urge Lizzy not to think of embracing such a life; and he received Lizzy's laboriously written notes in return, blotted with tears, but cheering him always to hope.

These simple reminders of the world without—messengers from his loved home, were at first Joe's only solace; they were like the bright beams of the moon breaking from behind a cloud upon the wanderer, and telling him that night was not always dark! But the running stream will wear the roughest stone. Joe's heart was not of adamant to resist the influence of surrounding circumstances, and at last he learned to bear with the vices of his comrades, not as good pleasantries, but as evils, existing, to be endured. He was settled, and his life of dull monotony continued for some time. Two years found him still a soldier, and might have found him perhaps a happier man, if he had not had a wife, a family, and a home, which had depended upon his toil and care for its support. Two years found him a soldier still, without any change of condition save a move from one barrack to another, the barter of one dreariness for another; but two years worked their changes in his home—two years marked forcibly their course upon the heart and on the face of Lizzy.

Poor girl! on the sunny morning when she had

accepted Joe's name, and embraced Joe's fate for her own in simplicity and faith, could she but have dreamt of the thorny path before her, she would have shrunk with terror and despair from the encounter ; but she was now too far upon the road for retreat, and when the clouds of misfortune gathered round her she had others to care for, and in her love for them was courage, the courage of a mother, whose soul abides no longer in herself, but in her children !

She could not part from Joe without laceration to her heart. The closing door seemed to shut her in a dark wilderness of death, and his parting footsteps sounded like the last thrilling cadences of the music of hope ! Her heart-strings were strained, and their melody was gone ; their discord rived her soul, and she could but weep when she would have died. The sorrow of her cold widowhood however did gradually settle into placid melancholy, and then she began to think of the future. Long and anxious consultations were held between her mother and herself upon their fast approaching destitution. Baby was very sickly, and the little store that Joe had left at their command was grown so very small that the price of another day's bread would exhaust it. But unheeding time brought round that day, and it was with a heavy heart, a tearful eye, and a mute appeal to the bounty of Providence against the bitter necessity that compelled her to sacrifice the wants of her sick *infant* to the wants of her strong son, her mother,

and herself, that poor Lizzy went down the village to buy the last loaf. Fortunately whilst she was out upon this errand, a brilliant thought possessed old granny at home, and she began to bustle about to execute the thought as soon as she had it.

The old woman put on her bonnet, and away she hobbled with "baby" to the doctor. She told the doctor the sad story of their woes, of their plight at home, begged some relief for the ailing child, and did her work so well that she returned to Lizzy a happy woman. She had succeeded in interesting the doctor and his wife so far in Lizzy's behalf, that a substantial looking half-a-crown was sent to her, medicine for baby was supplied, and Lizzy was to call round during the day herself to obtain some needlework the lady could give her. The doctor had attended Lizzy, and knew her husband as an honest and industrious young man; he was sorry to hear of the disastrous change at Joe's home, and being of a benevolent disposition, he hastened to minister comfort to the distresses of the poor woman whom he had before visited as an humble patient for a fee. Lizzy went up in the course of the day to the doctor's house, and with a thankful heart received the work prepared for her, which in due time she finished and returned. She had the benefit of the lady's recommendation, and she was able to procure work for some time, which kept her hands employed, and scantily supplied the little wants of her home, and it seemed like a ghastly gleam of sunshine through the darkening cloud.

Since the departure from this home however of its main stay, the contented husband, the toiling father, its desolation was complete. Lizzy's work was neither regular nor very profitable, and piece-meal the neat furniture of their cottage was obliged to go for the purchase of bread and a few potatoes. The noble mother looked always cheerfully on her children, but her courage was continually assailed by the pang which the sight of her drooping infant would draw from her heart.

Months passed away, and the only breaks in the dreariness of this sad home were those caused by the letters which they occasionally received from Joe. There was generally an enclosure of a shilling or two, and there was always a hearty "God bless you and the dear children, Lizzy," in every one of them. Although these letters were roughly written, badly spelt, and curiously shaped, they were angels of consolation and of comfort to his poor wife, for he always tried to cheer her with the hope that he should be able to get leave of absence for a few days and come to see them, and he cheered them with this hope because he always tried to dissuade Lizzy from coming into quarters; and indeed, as he told her, "if she was ever so wishful to come, the regiment had its complement of women, and no more soldiers could have their wives there at present." Lizzy wrote to Joe in return, whenever she could steal the time to do so, and save the postage out of her earnings. She always told Joe the village news, or as

much of it as she heard. She spoke of the kindness of the ladies who gave her work, and of their occasional visits to her humble cot. She told Joe that baby didn't grow strong, and it was nearly two years after their separation, that in writing to Joe, Lizzy said the doctor still came to see baby, who had been lately more delicate than usual.

Joe had not failed to notice these frequent mentions of his child's ill health and the doctor's visits, and he often thought of the watchings and the heart-aches this ill health must bring to his dear Lizzy, and he yearned sorely for a sight of her, for a word with her, to smile hope to her, and to speak confidence to her—confidence in the good God who is the father of the orphan, the husband of the widow. But Joe was a soldier! He was not a free man to do as he liked, but the slave of a tyrannous system, which had secured him mind and body for its use, and gave him for his freedom a shilling a day, and a bayonet!

Joe tried hard to get leave of absence for a few days, to go home and satisfy himself upon the subject of his dear wife's health, his child's life; but though Joe petitioned and importuned, and told his anxiety, he could get no leave ticket. All absence was forbidden, for it happened to be one of those periods, in the history of nations, when the genius of progress was vigorously insisting on taking one step further in advance towards paradise.

The world is a solid rock of prejudice beyond

which lies paradise. It is to paradise that progress leads, and it is through this rock, with as yet imperfect tools, that she has to work her way. What wonder then that centuries alone can count her steps? What wonder that generations of strong men are required to help her in her giant labour?

The reform movement was agitating. Right, like an honest man was clamorous for his own; and might, like a thief, was collecting his energies to refuse and to crush his clamorous besieger. Leave of absence was suspended. Riots were heard of, and soldiers must be ready to their duty. Their duty is to kill at the word of command. In times of popular agitations too, it might be dangerous to the loyalty of the soldier if he could know too much of patriotism. Their religion of duty is strictly guarded and unflinchingly maintained by its priesthood—military officers! Intercourse without the barrack precincts is carefully intercepted, and a desire is inculcated in the soldier, to revenge the captivity he suffers upon the mob he meets to slaughter!

There was no leave of absence to be had, and the interval since Lizzy's last letter grew alarming. Joe thought about deserting—at first he thought of it as a disgraceful thing to do—but still he thought of it, and very often too; so often, that at last his opinion quite changed, and he looked upon it as a positive necessity—the only thing to save his life, or at least his senses, for he was nearly mad. And then thought he, if he should be caught and tried, it could never

go very hard with him when his temptation was weighed against his offence. And if by good luck he should not be caught at all, he might escape this life of torture altogether, and become again an honest, hard-working man, happy with his wife and family around him once more. The thing was worth a trial Joe thought, and so Joe at last deserted.

Nottingham, the present quarters of the regiment, was soon left behind, when the bold offender had once started. He cautiously made his way into the fields, at the outskirts of the town, and there favoured by the dusk of the evening, he contrived without observation to effect a change in his dress ; for good luck, a few days before this event, had brought Joe in contact with his old rival Nat Willett, who was in Nottingham at this particular time, planning some deed of crime,—and Joe knowing his character, had procured his complicity in this hardy enterprise, and it was at the hands of Nat that Joe procured an excellent disguise with which he in a few moments started fully equipped. A navvie's smock and hat, with a pair of fustian trowsers, shielded him from observation, whilst the growing night was favourable to the journey ; but still the fear of chase and capture from behind, with the longing to his home before, lent speed to the flight, and it was almost without a pause, through the weary miles, that Joe pursued his way until the afternoon of the next day, when he came once more in sight of his loved home.

Anxiety and hope were in his heart when he

eagerly pushed through the portal, and there in horror for a moment did he stand.

It was no wonder that Joe gasped as though he were fainting,—that he felt stunned as though he had been struck,—that he became paralyzed and stupid, for the sight that greeted him, at once revealed a history to his mind.

The neat furniture of his cottage, which had been a heirloom to successive generations of Joe's family, was gone,—his wife,—his children, were gone too. The dream which always haunted him, now rushed across his mind, and made him shrink before the curious gaze of the strange faces that met him at his threshold, but a single breath gave him courage to grapple with despair, and uncaring, incautiously, he earnestly asked what had become of his wife, Mrs. Caplin. Joe had hardly patience to hear that his wife had left but three days since, and had set out for Sheffield to obtain employment at the factory of a Mr. Rollinson, before he was again upon his journey. Away he sped towards Sheffield, borne up for a long time still on the wings of hope, but sadly hurt by this hard trial. Joe's money fell short, his necessities became overpowering, and he was only saved perhaps from committing further crime against his country's laws, by fortunately assisting an inexperienced rider in the recovery of his horse, which having thrown him on the road, had scampered past the deserter and attracted his attention. Joe succeeded in catching the horse, and presenting him to his owner, received

a burly piece of silver in exchange for his service, which put him in good heart again, and sent him on his further journey substantially refreshed.

Sheffield was reached at last, after an infinity of hardships and fatigue. The foot-sore and heart-aching husband sought his wife in the wilderness of a large city, and his toil was at length rewarded by hearing of her lodging, at which, losing no time, he soon presented himself. He reached the place, he opened the door, he waited for a recognition. In a miserable chamber, a single broken chair, and a rickety stool, were all that could be seen. These were at the further end of the room, and they were occupied. Two women and a child suffering despair which cannot weep, were huddled there together. They heard the door open but they did not turn. To them it sounded but as the entrance of a stranger, and they shrunk from the gaze of all intruders. But something unusual was taking place, for the incomer paused, and one of the sad group turned a glance of sad inquiry to the door. She gave a wild scream, and in a dead swoon fell upon her companion's lap.

That scream ! how it shook Joe's soul ! That face, how it frightened him to madness ! How they both startled his fancy with the recollection of the horrible dream at his enlistment ! How earnestly he struck his horny hand upon his head, and called to God for mercy, as he saw in a moment the fulfilment. That face which had often baunted him in sleeping and in waking he now saw realized. It was his wife. His wife, his mother, and his eldest son it was who

formed that group on which he looked as though his gaze were turning him to stone !

What a story was there to tell the poor deserter ! and how it eased the grief-laden heart of weeping Lizzy, to pour the melancholy tale into the sympathizing ears of her dear helpmate ; to tell him all her sufferings and all her trials—to tell him of the sickness and the death of their little baby—of the rude visits of the broker, and the seizing of their all for rent—of the parish-burial, and their forced desertion from the home so dear to them all—of the journey to this busy city, and the unavailing efforts of three days to procure employment, the poor girl poured forth the sad recital, and in her husband's heart it sounded like the droning fall of an ice-cold cascade. Then mother had to tell of Lizzy's fortitude through all these struggles—of her untiring eyes, of her uncomplaining patience, and her unswerving faith in the Mighty Father of mercies. This cheered Joe again, but he could not help seeing in his wife's face the stains of watching and anxiety. Her countenance proclaimed beyond a doubt that the only measure of her life was wretchedness. Even at this moment they were all in destitution, unable to get work, un-owned by the parish,—unknown to all the thousands of the place, save two or three, and at the end of their provision they were in despair, contemplating a death of starvation as a welcome thing, when Joe had arrived, and for moment cheered them and revived them in their misery.

What a home for Joe to reach ! What a tale for

him to hear! What a result for his daring desertion! He seemed to have fallen from a desolate rock into an abyss of boiling waters. He quailed beneath the repeated frowns of fortune, and broken-hearted yielded to her spite. Like a drowning man he seemed struggling for an impossible goal! Lost and bewildered he could do nothing.

He fortunately had a residue of two shillings in his pocket when he reached the lodging, and this for a day or two kept them in food. During the night they slept upon the floor—during the day Lizzy sought work, and Joe wandered listlessly about the streets picking up a copper or so, occasionally by little jobs and services. It had never occurred to Lizzy to ask the reason of her husband's absence from his corps; indeed, so much absorbed were they all in the necessities of the present, that the past or the future never occurred to any of them till on the fourth day after Joe's arrival, when he was surprised at home by the piquet in search of him. Then it was that the whole truth flashed upon the twice-widowed wife in all its horror. Then it was, that traced and arrested, Joe, for the first time in his life, suffered a fetter on his limbs. He gloomily took his station between two files and marched whither they led. He heeded no one, his gaze was to the ground and he dared not look up. He felt the hand of Heaven chastised him, and he knew not where to seek for consolation. He heeded not the looks of curiosity from window or door—the idle

and careless glances from the carriage, or the look of contempt from the horseman. He noted not the pitying look of the passer by—he saw not his son beside him—he heard not the footstep of his wife behind him. His mind was a void, and living, he seemed dead.

A short interval served to transfer him back to quarters, upon reaching which, he was quickly consigned to a solitary cell. Lizzy with her son, by dint of tears and entreaties, shared her husband's journey, though separated from him, and was so fortunate as to attract the attention of the officer in charge of the deserter, who, notwithstanding his trade of human butchery, had still within his heart the feelings of a kind and sympathizing man. Her acquaintance with this unusual specimen of a soldier was of material service to her, for it enabled her to procure a lodging and the necessities of existence during the incarceration of her husband, and eventually procured admission into barracks for her by his generous interference in the proper quarters in her behalf. As a soldier, he bowed to discipline, as a man, he gave rein to the impulses of a good heart. He was Lizzy's saviour, and he had her gratitude. The thanks of the broken spirit are a feast of luxury to the virtuous heart.

THE BATTLE.

A FEW days sufficed to bring Joe to the trial of a Court Martial. Here it went hard with him. Laws had been broken, duty abandoned, and discipline outraged; punishment must follow! It moreover happened that desertion was a growing crime. The rigorous discipline of the time was constantly violated, and the officers had resolved for the future to intimidate their men by a forcible example of the retribution they might expect for this offence against the military code. Joe was the unlucky scape-goat, and notwithstanding his extenuating defence, he was condemned to receive a hundred lashes. The scene was prepared—the men stood in lines around the barrack-yard. To the sounds of solemn music the farriers brought forth the criminal, the infamous cat was ready, and the justice of glory was to be vindicated.

But how? By lashes of a leathern thong! Can such an instrument reclaim the careless or forgetful man? Can order and duty alone be maintained by terror and by fear? Can a fear-inspiring government produce good citizens? Can a system of terror make good soldiers, if soldiers there must be? Rather is not the lash the printing press of tyranny, so publishing in blood-red letters to the world its own weakness and infamy, that “he who runs may

read?" Is it not the chosen instrument of the devil to scathe humanity from the hearts invincible to his approach by other means? A standing army is a living blasphemy before heaven! It is a human machine invented by men to influence the justice, guide the decrees and instigate the revenges of a merciful and loving God, whom such a system would pronounce incapable of accomplishing his purposes without its alliance! Such a system can alone be supported by the strong hand of tyranny. Its laws can alone be administered by the lash!

Poor Joe was tied to the whipping-post. His bare back received one hundred blood-stained impressions of this printing type of the system. At the first blows he writhed in agony. His convulsive agitation and his piteous cries for mercy brought commiserating and sympathizing tears into the eyes of his comrades, but they could not help him; they were slaves of the same master, and they could only sympathize in secret and in silence, and think it was a sin for man to inflict such cruel punishment and degradation upon his fellow-man. The blows continued, and the sufferer swooned. The first stroke fell upon a living body, and the last fell still upon a living but senseless mass of tortured flesh. This living flesh was flayed in masses from his bones, and to clothe this profanation of the temple of life with decorum, and to give to revenge the semblance of justice, there stood the surgeon by the bleeding victim, to measure how far the culprit might be tortured

without fear of killing him. At length the castigation ceased ; his blood streaming from him, his flesh thong-ploughed upon him, and his face suffused in a cold perspiration as of death, the bonds were loosened, and he was carried to the hospital, there to receive the care of nurses and the attention of surgeons for the revival of a life which virtually had already ceased, and whose total extinction would have been the most merciful part of his punishment. But Joe was a soldier. If he had been a soldier's horse, and had left his stable or wandered from his field, when captured, he would have received kindness and care at the hands of his owners to inspire him with faith in them and love towards them ; but he was a soldier !—a man ! With feelings perhaps stronger, affections deeper, and intellect superior to a beast, the man must suffer at the hand of his fellow-man a torture which no one ever thought of inflicting upon the beast.

Whilst *men* in the army cost the nation less than horses, they are really worse fed, less cared for, and often punished with a barbarity, which used towards an animal, would bring down legal penalties upon the punisher. But Joe was a soldier. The talons of glory had pierced him, but he was still living, and might yet be useful. He would not be forgotten ; flogging was but an incentive to his better appreciation of a shilling a day and a soldier's destiny.

His sufferings were long and they were patiently borne. By constant importunity, and the good offices

of her excellent friend before mentioned, Lizzy at last managed to gain admission to her suffering husband. She and her son were added to the barrack population, and it was owing, in a great measure, to her careful nursing that Joe ever recovered at all. The punishment had not only blotted his outward skin, but it had seared his heart, and the corrosion of degradation wasted him more effectually than bodily suffering. He felt a brand upon him which, like that of Cain, would bring the contempt of crime upon him, when in the face of Heaven he had committed none. But Lizzy's care and love through days and weeks did gradually revive the weak man ; and it was after three months, and passing through the usual stages of convalescence, that Joe's name was returned to the authorities as one ready for the resumption of his duties.

He was immediately drafted into a regiment ordered on foreign service. Lizzy was to go with him, and little Joe was to be sent to London to receive the education bestowed by a paternal government upon the sons of soldiers, to fit them for their father's trade. They parted in sorrow and they never met again. Though the child met with care and kindness from his guardians, his constitution had been wasted and weakened by early poverty and want, and in his strange abiding-place he long pined for the affection of home and the love of a good mother whom he missed so much. He gradually drooped, and from *the effects of a violent inflammatory attack at last*

died, whilst those he loved were far away, thinking of him and living for him—loving and caring for him long after his weary little spirit had passed away.

The regiment into which Joe was drafted at once proceeded to Canada. The men had suffered the usual miseries of a transport passage, and were now quartered in this unquiet colony of the British empire. Their active services were likely to be called for here; the people were unsettled and turbulent, and it required the power of an army to force obedience to the government at their hands. Canada is a child of France, captured from its owners by the British, and afterwards ceded to them by the conquered French. This child has since then been nurtured by its step-mother, with the help of soldiers and their bayonets. But the people, bending to the military yoke and yielding to their foreign rulers, are never reconciled to them, and they often show their distaste to the government by turbulent gatherings and formidable insurrections.

Some time after the arrival in the country of this regiment, one of these formidable displays of hate was made by the people. A widely spread and well organized rebellion broke out over the country and deluged it in blood. People were arrayed against people,—man against his fellow—to slaughter and destroy! It was in vain that the rebels were repulsed and beaten. A defeat but gave them courage and increased their numbers. In every loss there seemed the germ of

future success, and they fought on with untiring ardour and with growing zeal against those whom they deemed their tyrannous oppressors. They grew in numbers. Frenchmen from Europe—American propagandists—English and Irish deserters swelled their ranks. They had formed an immense camp in a suitable locality, and they had determined to measure their strength in one grand and final battle with their formidable but hated antagonists. They thought they battled for their rights and freedom, and they waited the advent of the enemy with courageous hearts. That enemy was not long in making its appearance. With slow steps it came, and arrived, took its position with measured care and skilful observation. These rebels against the authority of their government were entrusted to them for extermination, and the work was too important to be slovenly performed. Both armies were to fight for the supremacy of religion, rule, and laws! The victory would only decide which religion was to be proclaimed national, which rule was to obtain, and what laws were to be obeyed! One side warred for a revival of the old régime under which they had been brought up; the other side warred for the permanency of the present state of things. The spirit of the prize they sought was the same on both sides—*supremacy* of form and *mode* of administration. They were in close contact now with each other, these contending factions, and to-morrow would decide the fate of one of them.

That morrow dawned in time upon the field! The

first act of the day was to supply the bodily wants; the second act was to pray, and then they were to kill. Strange infatuation! that men should pray so earnestly the moment before going cold-blooded into a battle-field. Strange anomaly that a priest is part of the furniture of a camp! A priest of the same religion, whose laws written by the finger of God himself, teach that "Thou shalt not kill," and that "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself!" The governments of civilized countries support churches to preach "Thou shalt not kill," and with the same money pay armies to violate the first and greatest law their religions teach. They consecrate their banners with prayers, and disguise the infamy of the trade under the names of honour and glory! In preaching they say peace, but in practice they make a desert and call that peace!

These rival armies prayed! They prayed to the same God for the same boon—victory. And then they rushed into the deadly conflict to deprive each other of that life which God had given, and with which no man should part! And how is Divine justice meted out on such occasions? Believe me there is none! Terrible as it may sound, it is yet true! Man is a free agent to work for good or evil as he pleases; men became soldiers, and the devil invented war for their employment! *He* is the presiding deity on such occasions, and a day of battle is a holiday in hell! But God hears not the prayers of armies—their existence is a blasphemy to him—their action

a cause of sorrow. From scenes of carnage God turns his face away, and in his wrath pronounces doom on *all* engaged! These armies met. Long, terrible, and doubtful was the issue. On one side was coolness, and skill, and science; on the other side was the courage of despair—the frantic energy of defeat. Volumes would not tell the horrors of a fight. Hitherto scribes have never told them. They have glossed over the frightful experiences of the fighting masses to pick out some hero, and to tell his deeds of daring in the fray. A battle in their hands tells the honour of the conquering country, and idolizes some fortunate or courageous individual. Henceforth history must differ. Let it describe the scenes of slaughter, plunder, violation and crime, with half the vivid force till now devoted to the glory of the conquest, and we shall soon find an altered sentiment in the hearts of men upon the subject of war.

This particular encounter is inscribed in history as a very brilliant affair! Does it look brilliant to see a peaceful village sending the smoke of its burning ruins up to heaven? Does it look brilliant to see heaps of the dying and the dead around? Does it look brilliant to see that fine regiment of cuirassiers hewn down by their wild opponents? Does it look brilliant to see the captain rallying his weary men to another charge upon the rebels? Does it look brilliant to see poor Joe with a kerchief bound over a deep sword-cut in his head—pale and faint from loss of blood—confused and terrified by this dreadful

warfare? If these things *do* look brilliant, why war is a glorious profession, and we ought every one of us to become soldiers immediately. If war-makers could look upon and share in the terrors they create, they would surely relent from their brute policy of war! They would disband armies and weep the tears of contrition!

The moment of victory was come. The men whom Captain Gilling was endeavouring to rally, had turned themselves for flight. The captain arrived amongst them in the nick of time, and by his bold courage reassured them and cheered them on to an attack of the rebels in flank, whilst they were hewing down the dragoons before them with terrible effect. Joe was amongst this body of panic-stricken soldiers, and seeing all eager in a moment to follow the captain in the perilous adventure he proposed, Joe could not but join. The movement was effected—the enemy surprised in flank. They fought like wounded tigers. They had seen their last hope vanish with the rising flames of the village, and they had resolved to sell their lives as dearly as possible. They perished to a man, and left their memory behind in the havoc they had made. Evening had gathered on the scene, and the victorious army, sadly decimated, returned to the camp to celebrate a victory.

A victory is celebrated in a civilized camp much in the same manner as in a savage village. Such festivities are not capable of improvement. War songs

and dances, drunkenness and debauchery, immorality and vice, are elements of these saturnalia, common to savage as to civilized man. But believe not that there is a light heart or a joyous face in such moments. The greatest joy of a victory is to be alive; the next to meet again with those from whom the last parting might have been for ever. The mother and the wife have their joy too. But who shall tell the sorrows of a victory? Who shall cheer the widow and the orphan? Who shall console the childless mother and the wretched and lonely sister? Who shall stay the hot tears that day has sent gushing from many a troubled heart? Who shall heal the broken spirits that day has caused? It is sorrows like these which are the real celebrations of a victory: the drunken orgies of a camp are but a mockery—such a celebration as a band of murderers would have upon the death of their victims. The heart of a soldier at a victory is indeed unquiet, and it is for him to reconcile his conscience to God after the commission of such deeds of blood. When shall the nations rage no more? When shall the spear be turned into the reaping hook, and the sword become a useful ploughshare? When military fame shall be a brand. When military honours and distinctions are abolished. When all men know the horrors of the system—the infamy of the warfare. When Jesus shall be more honoured than Judas. When virtue shall take precedence of glory. Then shall the demon of the battle.

field vanish—then shall the harps of heaven burst forth into an extatic hymn of praise, and its choir at last proclaim the joyful tidings, “Peace on earth—goodwill to men.”

The sands of time run quickly, but the young plant of truth grows vigorously, and ere long as the mustard seed, it shall fill the earth like a mighty tree!

THE NIGHT AFTER THE BATTLE.

THE battle was lost and won! The living vaunted and the dead reposed! The victors quaffed wine while the earth drank blood! Sin for this day had reigned triumphant! And death by sin! Men had appealed from God's tribunal of Divine justice to the human tribunal of a battle-field for their rights! Had justice attended the decision? The few had fallen before the many. Courage and enthusiasm had been overcome by discipline and science. Rashness fell before calculation, and the amateur of war had yielded the palm to the professor. If there is any justice in a decision thus produced, there was sublime justice in this victory; for the rebels had fallen to a man, and their cause in losing them was crushed and broken. Still, the sun set on that evening with the same glory on the battle-field as on the peaceful farm or hamlet! It is only wonderful that outraged nature does not so signally manifest its indignation at the crimes of battles as to engulf the armies in some vast and terrible destruction. Yet what destruction of nature could be more vast and terrible than that they deal upon themselves? Soldiers beware! your deeds shall be judged.

Joe was one of the panic-stricken body who eventually changed the fate of the day. He had fought

as a courageous man will fight to save himself from death. He had fallen covered with wounds and glory. It must be an immense source of satisfaction to a good-hearted soldier to die upon the field of battle, with the reflection that he has done his duty to his country—to feel that he has ravaged the ranks of his country's enemies—to know that he has butchered his share of his fellow-creatures. Joe, however, had not fallen to die. He already showed a deep sabre-cut in the head, when by joining the corps for the rescue of the cuirassiers, under the leadership of Captain Gilling, he received a terrible handling from the maddened foes. One arm nearly severed from his body, and then a leg dislocated by the violent swinging of a musket, soon laid poor Joe fainting and stiff upon the ground, where for a long time he was unconscious of the world to which he still belonged. The trampling feet of the combatants upon his body hurt him not—the thought of his anxious and watching wife troubled him not—till the fray was over and the field was won.

Evening deepened into night. The moon gave forth sickly and humid rays, as though she tried to hide from her sight the ghastly spectacle she was obliged to witness. Silence reigned over that field, so lately hot with the fire of contending passions, and noisy with the clash of arms. An occasional groan of pain, the wolf's baying, or the vulture's shriek, were the only signs of the life remaining amongst those heaps of dead!

A woman had been weeping that live-long day. She had been praying. She had sorrowfully seen the columns move forward in the morning to the fight. She looked in the faces of those who returned with a thrill of horrible anxiety. She looked amongst the blood-stained victors for a face she knew, and found it not ! What could have happened ? Was he dead ? Impossible ! She had no enemies,—no one could be so cruel to *her* as to kill that dear husband whom she loved. He could not be dead. What had *he* done, or *she*, that he should die ? Perhaps by accident he had been wounded ; at all events he did not return in the ranks of the conquerors. Her impulse was to seek him on the field, and away she sped, on, on, through heaps of dead, slipping in pools of blood, stumbling over guns or broken carriages, wildly calling upon Joe, thinking not of the horrors of the place, seeking but Joe—her dear love Joe ! This woman was Lizzy. She prosecuted her long search with the ardour of a despairing woman, and at last she found the object of her care. That moon, which seemed weeping and in mourning, shone for a few moments steadily upon the ground, and the woman stopped to gaze around her. She marked a spot whereon the mortal harvest seemed to have fallen thicker beneath the scythe of death than elsewhere. Instinct guided her to this spot, and there she searched. She looked intently upon each dead face, and thus engaged, she heard a piteous mourning voice, “ Oh Lizzy ! Lizzy ! ” She turned to trace that wel-

come sound. "God bless you, Lizzy, and protect you, and be merciful to you for my sufferings;" then sobs began to mingle with the further prayer—which with a scream of terrible energy, Lizzy (for it was her) rushed in a moment to interrupt, by caressing the sad petitioner, and weeping such tears as the father did whose son being dead was alive again, who being lost was again found. The scream was one of thanksgiving, and the tears were those of joy; but Lizzy soon began to look into the actual condition of her wounded husband, and then the tears ceased, activity was needed to retain poor Joe's fast fleeting spirit. Her dress was torn into bandages, and these soon covered the bleeding gashes. The sufferer recovered his fainting senses. He was very weak, but he thought with his wife's support he might be able to reach the tents of the army. The experiment was tried, and manfully did Joe take three steps, in what he thought prime marching order. At the fourth step he could feel no footing—he reeled and fell—dead, Lizzy thought at first, but no that never could be—her Joe could never die. His sufferings might be worse to bear than death, but in all his sufferings he lived to give her all the happiness she knew; in his death she would have lost everything she lived for, and he could not die. She rubbed his face, she chafed his hands, she called him by his name, she told him his Lizzy was by his side—asked him for her sake, their child's sake, for his own sake, to look into her face and live.

Whilst Lizzy was thus engaged, entreating the life back to the inanimate body of her husband, there were other women on that dreary field come upon like errands as herself—errands of love and mercy. There were men there too, who came on errands far less holy : those horrible beings who follow an army for its plunder—who fatten upon death, and gain their luxuries from the spoils of a carcass ; these are of all men the worst—the outcasts of every society, without laws, without fear of man or God before them. They are fit companions for the beasts, whose fellows they are. They have nothing by which to claim the name of man but the form, and this is often by the vices of their life, and the depravity of their calling, shorn of the nobility of aspect and deportment so generally inherent in the figure of man.

One of these marauders, or camp-followers as they are more politely termed, when we first became acquainted with him belonged to a class of men about whom society is beginning to ask itself serious questions. It becomes very doubtful if there would be poachers under a system comprising more universal education, with a fairer division of labour and riches. If this man had received his due from the society to which he belonged, he would doubtless have grown up a good citizen. He was naturally intelligent, but intelligence uncultivated becomes cunning and knavery. This man, originally neglected by his parents from hard necessity, neglected by society from carelessness, had grown up in ignorance

and vicious habits which isolated him in the world. From poaching he took to thieving, from that to burglary. Fear of detection, after a particularly bold and successful attempt at house-breaking in Nottingham, had driven him abroad, and even there, where a chance of starting on a better course of life was presented to him, the old Adam still clung so tenaciously that, to the life of an honest farmer, or tradesman, or labourer, he preferred the lazy and vicious life of the marauder; and this night he was on the field, gathering his spoils and pursuing his avocation with all the coolness of honesty. He picked up swords which were not much damaged—he cut off officers epaulets when he could find them—he stripped the bodies of their clothes—he rifled the pockets of the dead men who resisted him not. If he found life still clinging to any whom he wished to rob, he beat their skulls in with a heavy hammer that he carried; and thus he worked his way about this golgotha, accompanied by the kite and the wolf, occasionally cheered in his unholy heart by the wailings and laments around him. He was pursuing his round of robbery and busied in his horrible trade, when he heard, at a short distance, the sounds of a woman's voice. "That's right, Joe! Do look up again, it is your own Lizzy who is by you Joe—I'll take care of you. Rouse yourself Joe and let us try to get to the camp." These sounds attracted the robber to the spot where Lizzy was kneeling by Joe's side. Joe tried to raise himself. One arm was

wounded and senseless, upon the other he rested. The fitful moon, for a moment, lighted the dreary prospect around them. The dead and their devourers alone were there. Lizzy heard footsteps on the grass, she turned towards the sound and at once confronted the marauder. It was Nat Willet. He stood over her. A clenched fist, and the hammer, ready for its murderous employ, told of his errand. His face dark and lowering, covered with hair and stained in blood, showed a determination to let no spoil escape his clutch; to let no victim, living or dead, pass by unrifled; he, indeed, looked horrible, and Lizzy's natural impulse was to raise her hand and beg for mercy at his hands. Joe turned his livid face upon Nat, who seeming to have some recollection of it, asked in a coarse tone, "Is that your husband?" "Yes, yes, it is my dear, dear Joe," said Lizzy passionately, "Oh if you are a man spare us and help us to some place of safety, where I can get his wounds dressed! Oh! have mercy upon us! for heaven's sake help us!"

"Do you come from England?"

"Yes, from Alstonfield in Staffordshire."

"What's your name?"

"Caplin."

The hammer relaxed in Nat's hand—the clenched fist loosened, and a faint glimmer of light struggled through his dark soul at the recollection of his native place, the home of his childhood, where love and peace had early left him to the toils and policy of

dishonesty. "Well," resumed he, after a moment's pause and in a huskier voice, "I won't hurt you; is Joe badly wounded?" "Yes, I'm afraid he is," replied Lizzy thankfully, "but do help us, there's a good soul!" Nat set himself to work upon the first charitable act of his life, and helped Joe once more on his legs. His dislocated and stiffened limb gave him great pain, and he could hardly totter or hop along at all. Nat helped Lizzy with him as near the tents as he dare venture, and then the courageous wife supported him in her arms, and almost carried him, weak and exhausted as he was, into the camp, where she soon procured some medical assistance and a litter, with as many other comforts as the place would yield to the poor maimed soldier who had bled in his country's cause.

Nat parted from them without having the courage to reveal himself to the man whom he had once envied the championship of the village race-course, whom he had afterwards aided to escape from the thralldom which their previous rivalry had led him into, and whom he again so strangely met crushed and tortured by that fearful system to which he had fallen an ensnared victim. Nat was sometime before he could overcome the feeling this meeting had given him; it was the faint struggle in his heart of the mite of virtue against the mass of corruption and brutality; he could not forget it, and it was long before he regained sufficient nerve or composure to

resume his unhallowed occupation. He did resume it however ; he succeeded in crushing and extinguishing the last faint spark of nature which had struggled to illumine the darkness of his soul, and he returned to that scene of horror and of death—to exact tribute from the corpses of the unburied slain.

Great heaven ! Can it be believed that such things are ? Can such scenes have been contemplated as a part of the beautiful drama of thy beneficent creation ? No, surely ! It is thou who hast built the blue skies above us, and through them dost show to us thy universe of worlds beyond ! It is thou who hast laid the carpet of vegetation upon the earth to make it beautiful ! It is thou who hast furnished it with wild luxuriant forests, as a mantle to its nakedness ! It is thou who hast made the birds to sing their songs of praise and joyfulness to thee ! It is thou who in thine image hast made man the ruler of thy works on earth ! In harmony hast thou created all ! And it is no work of thine—this battle-field—this field of tares ! “It is an enemy hath done this !” Lord ! thou hast power, and might, and majesty divine ! Thou dost make, and man it is who mars thy work ! His wicked and contending passions, unsatiated in appetite for blood by the daily death of thousands of his inferior companions in the world—unsatiated by their flesh and blood for *food*, these evil passions of men make battle-fields for the slaughter of his fellow-

man, upon whose flesh he does *not* feed. Thou dost create, but not for the knife. Thy beneficence implants in each nature the means of dissolution at the proper moment. Man seeks to frustrate thine omnipotent laws by violence and war. It is man who says "kill." *He* first ordains, and then executes by wholesale "murder!"

THE RETURN.

FOR a long time Joe was under the surgeon's hands. The perversity of his fate seemed to condemn his life to the infliction of medicine continually. At least it had happened that since assuming the red coat, his existence had been repeatedly threatened by his profession, and restored by the doctor. He had alternated between the camp and the surgery. Such experiences as were in them worked their deadly influence upon his constitution. Weakened first by the torture of the lash and its consequent prostration, then by the influence of bad air and bad accommodation on a long transport voyage—again by the toils and hardships of foreign service, Joe had not sufficient stamina to enable him to recover from his latest and worst misfortunes—the misfortunes of war—the chances of the field. Notwithstanding he received every attention, he could not rally. His long exposure in a wounded state upon the ground had told against his recovery, and prolonged his sufferings. His leg was stiff, and he could never regain its wonted use. The deep sabre wound in his arm but slightly cicatrized, would often gape afresh, and pour forth its crimson tears in memory of its being. His face bruised and cut, had lost its *natural look*, assuming a livid and ghastly appear-

ance, which, while it was to every veteran soldier he might meet a sure passport for boon companionship, yet kindled a feeling of horror and disgust in the sons of peace, who stay at home and know nothing more of war than its shows of gaudy splendour, or its lies of glory and fame. Beyond this, the climate of Canada did not suit him, and from the severity of its winters he became affected with a dry short cough, which ceaselessly kept on its melancholy discord; like the hoarse creak of the raven it told unmistakeably of the church-yard. Evidently Joe would never be fit for service again; he was now one of the tattered garments of glory, who hastened to disencumber herself of so useless an appendage. As soon as sufficiently recovered, he was to be drafted home on sick leave, to try the effect of change of air, or to be cast off altogether. He was pronounced sufficiently recovered, when with head still bound, his arm in a sling, and his leg supported by a crutch, he could manage to hobble across the barrack-yard. He received his orders for departure with a beating heart, for he longed again before his death to see his old, once happy home. He longed again to clasp his dear young child to his warm and loving heart, for they did not know that that dear child was even then watching them from above, and smiling a soft tear of heaven upon their loving thoughts. An earth-born thought nourished by tears from heaven is a growing seed which has its harvest in eternity, and whose fruit is immortality.

The next ship sailing bore Joe and Lizzy to the cherished country of their birth—the land of their early and their happy home. There were many other passengers with Joe from the hospital of the regiment, some in as miserable a plight as he, some worse off. Lopped limbs and mutilated trunks were the rule on board—the sound and healthy were the exceptions. This was a cargo of the fruits of war—of the cast-off, useless sons of glory, whose talons now loosed their tight hold upon her victims, and having most effectually maimed them, would now pension them perhaps on a shilling a day for the remainder of their brief lives—perhaps on less than that. It might give their widow some acknowledgment of services the man had rendered, and it might not. Many contingent circumstances go to the procurement of a pension, and where the soldier can be wronged with impunity, be sure he often is. The system is one of barbarism and tyranny, and is not supported by laws of peace or deeds of virtue.

It seemed a weary voyage home, and yet there were many reflections which should have cheered it to them. Relief from the tedious conventionalities of the soldier's life—from the hard necessities and base requirements of his detestable profession—returning to peace and home again—all these showed change for the better; but then the consciousness of his state of health—alarm for his wife and her fate if he should die—and, ever and anon, the terrible refraction from his mind of that dream, which, since

its first appearance, had continually haunted him, weighed heavily upon his heart, banishing everything like joy or gladness therefrom.

The presence of his wife ministered a sad and melancholy comfort to him—alone prevented his falling into the utter depths of despair, and so was a relief. The voyage was long and tedious; but he at last reached the shores of his native land, where he was submitted to a critical examination, and had the good fortune to be nominated one of the pensioners of the crown.

The first news which greeted their return, and which they heard with patient resignation, was the death of their son. They seemed silently to regard this as the last act of a malicious fortune which had remorselessly followed them since Joe's first taking to the profession of arms. He was out of it now, they feared nothing, and with hearts pining for rest and solitude, very soon after their landing, they set out for their own first home—the village of Alstonfield—from which Joe had been absent now seven years.

Here he would find seven years of changes marked upon his friends, and all he had known. His little nephew had grown strong and healthy amongst his brothers and sisters at home. Brother John had heard with sorrow of Joe's "listing," and would have been the first to hold out the hand of assistance to his bereaved sister-in-law and her children, had his means allowed him to do so; but John was obliged

to work hard for a shilling, and he had to look twice at a penny before spending it. He always thought of his children, he always worked for them, and now he began to see the result of all his toil ; the numerous family were growing up happy and united, and during the five years of Joe's absence, the eldest son had obtained a permanent employment in Ashbourn, which enabled him to live comfortably, and add a few shillings occasionally to his father's scanty savings. Thus in the midst of toils they were all contented and cheerful. No repining word ever passed their lips—no complaint of their hard and lowly lot ; their sole mental occupation, besides the little duties of the charity school that the young ones had, seemed to be how they could derive the greatest amount of enjoyment from everything about them. John's family was an excellent specimen of the happiness and content that is so often found in the peaceful cottage of the labouring poor man, and it was to the bosom of this contented little band of growing "hewers of wood and drawers of water," that the news of Joe's arrival in England brought unfeigned pleasure.

It was a beautiful evening of the seventh autumn since his first departure, when Joe and his wife Lizzy arrived on the outskirts of the village. The baggage waggon on which they were passengers halted, and set them down within sight of the home they had once called their own. Their snug cottage, standing on a rising ground at the extremity of a

field of new-cut wheat, was the first thing that greeted them, and it seemed to smile a sad welcome upon their return. They recognised it as they would have done the smile of an old and valued friend. They bid adieu to their travelling companions, and Lizzy tearfully watched the waggon slowly rumble out of sight with its cargo of mutilated men and grief-worn women. The exertion of getting from the vehicle had been fatiguing to her husband, and she made him rest awhile upon the trunk of a tree which lay on the road-side.

What a simple but affecting picture did they form, that sad world-weary couple, returning to the scene of their early loves and toils!—their own birth-place and that of their now dead children—the tomb of their happiness—the first field of woes and sufferings which there commenced, had been endured for years away from it. How differently did they return to it. In the meridian of life, yet looking old and care-worn, the wife wan, ill-clothed, and motherless, the husband maimed, hacked, and wrecked—both heart-sore, but still loving each other as in the first days of their happy courtship. Joe rested to recover breath, holding his crutch in one hand, whilst the other still hung in a sling, he looked first on that, and then on the red stripe of his trowsers, and then at his worn-out shoes, and then he looked to the ground and was lost in a reverie of painful thought for a few moments, till his bandaged temples throbbed again with such excitement. His wife took a silent farewell of their

late companions, and a tear trickled down her pallid cheek as inwardly she bid adieu to them for ever.

When Joe was rested they pursued their way to brother John's, and a warm and hearty welcome they met with there. Arrangements were immediately made for the accommodation of the old soldier and his wife, and they took up their permanent residence in the house, paying brother John the whole of the pension Joe received, in return for their good offices. Here they passed the short remainder of their chequered days, and they were not many ; but it was in the midst of sorrow and tears—in the midst of warm affection, and in peace, that the poor soldier and his wife within a few days of each other yielded their spent souls to their beneficent Creator, and the last prayer of thanks for this his goodness, which had not left them to perish on the dismal battle-field of a foreign shore, but had preserved them to this calm end amongst the scenes of their childhood, and surrounded by the attentions and the grief of their poor but loving relations.

It is perhaps of little consequence that they were carried in coffins of parish elm to pauper graves in the churchyard of their forefathers, or that the simple mound which rose above their single tomb has now sunk level with the earth, and buried their resting-place with them in oblivion ; but had Joe never left Alstonfield, the record of his end might have been different.

Old granny, at the breaking up of Joe's home, had

had no other resource than the workhouse. Overcome by the misfortunes in the family of her favourite son, the old woman had become morose, and discontented with all around her. Her unhappy old age passed in continual grumbling, and she died at last during her son's exile from home, by a voluntary starvation.

Nat Willet never returned to England. He realized some money by the spoils of the battle-field, with which he set off for the backwoods of the far west, to try the hardships of a bush life. But having a great knack of revenging himself upon his neighbours, the Indians, for their frequent depredations on his clearing, by shooting them, he soon roused their animosity so much that they attacked and burnt his dwelling. They seized on Nat their enemy, pinioned him to a tree, and pierced him with a score of bullets; they danced round him, singing their song of death, scalped him, and finally tossed his body in the flames, to be consumed in the pyre he had himself provoked at their hands.

Of the companions of Joe Caplin from Alstonfield, none ever returned. One went to India and was never heard of again. A second was whipped so severely that he died from the effects of it; and a third, who had been with Joe in Canada, was shot by his comrades before breakfast one morning, not so much it seemed for his having deserted from his regiment, as for his having repented of the act, and

having returned to his duty. He had been shot at the word of command by his companions in arms.

Thus we have traced the career of an humble follower of the "glorious profession of arms;" and now for its moral. This teaches a few simple truths. It teaches that what has been represented as a halo of glory is nothing more than a vapour of blood; that a laurel is really a belladonna, and the noble calling altogether a mockery, delusion, and snare! Beware ye simple sons of toil! Beware of the trap recruiting sergeants may lay for you! Beware of the incautious drinking which may lead you to the barrack and the battle-field! Think of the cruelty ye must commit upon your brother-man, and the offence ye perpetrate before high heaven! Ye shun with loathing the midnight murderer, and ye place his doom in eternal torments hereafter! Yet ye, when ye become soldiers, but become robbers and assassins for pay, and the guilt of murder shall in a day of judgment banish your own souls to the same perdition, with that midnight murderer whom ye loathe so much! Think ye that your red coats shall plead against the butchery of which ye have been guilty, which is done in open day with more ferocity than the killer of a single man in a fit of passion ever dreamed of? The soldier is as answerable for every life he destroys in battle as though he had killed every man for his own private revenge; and though society maintains and honours the soldier, God judges and condemns him.

“Thou shalt not kill,” is a plain, simple, and unmistakeable command. Let those who please infringe it, the consequences are their own. There is no escape from divine justice. But the enormity of this crime of wholesale murder called war is such, that we who have thought upon the subject should hasten to show these truths to our more perverse brethren—to urge them to recant the opinions they hold in favour of this existing Juggernaut, and against humanity and the God of truth—to persuade them to better things, and bring them in the end to unite with ourselves in establishing “Love, Joy, Peace,” for it is written, “Vengeance is mine; I will repay saith the Lord;” and the existence of a soldier is in opposition to that sacred writing.

Be not cast down, ye who labour in God’s holy cause. The sands of time run quickly, but the young plant of truth now grows apace, and as the mustard-seed, ere long shall it fill the earth like a mighty tree.

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THE SCRABSTER FAMILY.

AN EXTRACT FROM AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY.

I.

AFTER having lived the placid life of a stern recluse for some time, it occurred to me, in one of my infrequent ventures into society, to fall into the company of a lady with whose agreeable manners, vivacious intelligence, and charming sundries, I was at once captivated. I had for some time withdrawn from what are called the pleasures and gaieties of town life, and had settled down with an old friend my only solace and companion, a pipe, in a set of miserably cold chambers, where the chimnies always smoked, the doors and windows creaked and grained, and the laundress was old, halt, and asthmatical. It was strange that these things had never occurred to me before, but on the evening of my introduction to Dulcinea, after having become somewhat intoxicated with too much indulgence in her brilliant conversation; and after having parted from her with as much reluctance as a captain from his anchor on a stormy night, these, and a thousand other miseries which I continually endured, rushed upon my overwrought mind with crushing force. I shook the hand of my host and his wife

with a melancholy indifference, and left the house to encounter the weather and the mud of a dreary November night, in a solitary walk from Kensington to Gray's Inn. A combined mixture of snow and rain was floating about the cold atmosphere, settling uncomfortably upon one's face and clothes. I had no umbrella, for I hated such contrivances, and had long abandoned the use of them. My hat would be spoilt, but what of that? The hat, never an ornament, could not possibly be rendered more hideous by a soaking. I was sure to be drenched. No matter. It would bring on my intermittent rheumatism a week before its time, close up the nasal orifice, and commence my coughing performances a little sooner than usual. That was all! I laughed, a short, dry, timid, hollow sort of laugh, which as soon as it reached my own ears, rushed in, penetrated into the very depths of my poor conscience, and seemed to echo and reverberate within, and moan a sort of reproof that this was a little *too* strong. I was silent. Steadily pawing over the ground, or rather through the mud, I occasionally plashed into a pool of liquid dirt, and by a curious and well known hydraulic operation, deposited the contents on my clothes and within-side my shoes. The upper man was slowly moistening and soddening, from the continuous influence of the uncomfortable deposit of the combined mixture of snow and rain. A sensation of cold crept over me, and round about me, and completely through me; the blood receded from all parts into my heart, and seemed there to become *congealed* by the cold draught of wind that rushed

through the deserted veins. I felt bleak and woe-begone. Never had the world seemed so cold. Cold to the very heart; stone cold, and irrecoverably cold. My feet seemed to be enveloped in wet sponges rather than leather and warm lamb's wool. My body seemed shrouded in dank seaweed, and my nose for the nonce became a spout to carry off the accumulation of moisture from the eaves of my roofing tile. What was the wonder that I began seriously to review my past career, my present position, and my future prospects? What was the wonder that this communion was cheerless, blank, and horrifying?

Practically I walked on, whilst mentally I looked back to reassure myself as to the wisdom of my past years and conduct. What was the aspect? Imaginative seclusion! Placid retirement! Calm solitude! I began to apostrophise "Sweet solitude!" when the internal moan was again audible, and it seemed to shape itself into a low whispering word, which must have been "Dulcinea." True, said I in reply; solitude does not seem so reliable after one has met a Dulcinea. It may be, even, that the charms of solitude, comparatively, are paled before the brilliancy of Dulcinea; and that one would never retreat into solitude, if one could fall in with a Dulcinea at the proper moment. However, I have had a good deal of solitude, and I must insist that it has not been totally unprofitable. But to come to the present position I occupy. Is it advisable that I should continue my banishment from the social circle and domestic pleasures? This, though tending somewhat to the future, brought me to the

consideration, What is solitude ? I plumped at this moment into the centre of the deepest puddle I had yet come to, and my legs were at once involved in a thick shower of dirty spray. The divergence from the perpendicular, caused by the suddenness and surprise of this incident, nearly cost me my balance ; but I happily recovered and readjusted myself, though at the expense of my hat, which fell with a hard wooden sound, like a box, on the pavement, and then, impelled by the momentum rolled along the mud-thick path. As I picked up the wretched object, the internal moan revived and intensified, while a kind of despair seemed for a moment to seize hold of me, and shake me, and grin and glower upon me, and brush up each particular hair upon my head, stark and stiff. I endeavoured to reason away this feeling. Impossible ! One might as well attempt to reason down the squalls of a nursery at washing time. The halt laundress, platter-faced and weazing, seemed to gasp upon my very face. The snoutless ewer, the cracked basin, the split sheets, rose white and deformed upon my vision. The leaking teapot, the dim exhausted mirror, the grimy kettle, and the departed handles of the drawers, and legs of the chairs, clattered upon my hollow ears ; while the chimney atmosphere of my apartments, and the chill black discomfort of the wretched hearth, palpably affected all my other senses. Thus, to realize my present position, I was now walking in moist sponges, enveloped in dank seaweed ; surmounted by a supracilliary hat and ornamentation of mud, surrounded by mud ; and beyond, a sea of difficulties, miseries,

catarrh and rheumatism, relieved (if I may use the term without abuse) by a small river of grit gruel, and enlivened, if possible, by the companionable perfume of some luxurious Latakia. This was the vision of solitude that replied to my query.

Such were my prospects, present and to come. If I had not felt dull under them, I should have been more or less than human. For a moment, however, I triumphed over the internal moan-itions. They advised me that as a husband and a father, or even as a social and domestic bachelor, I should be bound now under penalties to be in a cab, rather than prowling along like a starved wolf through this elementary disturbance and chaotic night. I rejoined, Ah ! Warm hearths and wives, and domestic joys soon lead to Christmas bills, and milliners, and multiplied domestic ties ; and then one must be taken care of to look after all these things, and scrape together the wherewithal to maintain them, and pray where is that to come from ? Where, where is the money to come from, my friend ? My friend was silent this time and I triumphed. But how vain are all mortal triumphs ! The vision of my chambers rose again. The wind whistled through the keyholes and the crannies, through doors and windows, and down the chimney. Every accustomed creak, creaked loud and louder. Every familiar crack, cracked over again. Every annoying leak, leaked stronger and more wastefully, till with accumulated rents, cracks and leaks, whistles, soot and creaks, I fairly stood aghast at the tormenting miseries which beset me. It was plain to me that some change was necessary. I could not remain as

I then was. *Some* remedy must be propounded for existing inconveniences ; but *what* the remedy was to be, further reflection must decide.

My trials were not yet over for this night. It always happened so. Singular ! that I could never leave my own den (as a familiar friend called it) without some misfortune befalling me. Perhaps it would be nearer the truth, to say that I fell upon a pile of misfortunes on these occasions. A pile of misfortunes !—like a pile of fixed bayonets, sharp, touching, piercing, and disagreeable ! I missed my way, and considerably prolonged my walk and my sufferings thereby ; but that was a trifle. I reached my den, and, mounting the stairs, began to congratulate myself upon the near prospect of a good whiff, and to search for my key at the same time. It was near upon two o'clock a. m., and I was tolerably prepared to go to sleep. A long walk under the influence of the heavy wet I had experienced produced a strong soporific tendency. I searched one pocket after another. I drew forth a wet globular mass of paper from one corner, through which I unconsciously passed my finger in my vigorous search. Wretch that I was, I bethought myself as I looked upon the crunched mass, that it was my MS. Poem on the “Immortality of Genius,” in eighteen pages foolscap, which I had taken out with me to leave with my publisher in the morning, and had forgotten. But my key, where was that ? No pocket confessed it, no search produced it. Despair and horror took possession of my mental tenement, and nothing could I do for the eviction of these grim bailiffs. I stood there

leaking, dripping, soddened, clammy, with my hands groping uselessly for the third time in my pockets, when it flashed across my mind that I had put the latch-key upon my dressing table that I might be sure not to forget it, and in my courteous haste to be in time to dinner, I had rushed off and left it behind me. What an infatuated idiot is a man in a hurry! thought I. It was impossible to be cool under such circumstances. Cool! gracious heavens! Cool means 60 degrees Farenheit, or thereabouts, and I was below Zero. Cool! I was bleak and frigid to the very marrow. Petrified! And yet I was foaming, boiling, frantic. A sort of red-hot iceberg, if the contradiction may be understood. I was ready and eager to tear out my hair by the roots, rend my garments into shreds, and gnash my teeth into powder. But there was no help for me, and I was forced to succumb to my miserable fate. I saw plainly, that at two o'clock a. m. without a latch-key, there was no home, no bed, no pipe, for me that night; but instead, a damp despair and a bleak horror. Moreover, if I wished ever to get within my own door again, I must sit on the stairs and wait the arrival of the halt laundress, as I had forgotten her address which was in my pocket-book on the other side of the cursed door; and she happened to be a stranger in the Inn, whom I had employed from a pity for her large family, and personal infirmities. This I had to do, and the accomplishment of the feat I will rather leave to imagination, than endeavour to describe.

II.

At length the morning dawned. The ninth hour brought with it a termination to my undeserved penance, by the appearance of the limping Hebe, afflicted purveyor to all my wants, and cleaner of my chambers. Had she been my mother, or my deaf Consols aunt, or even my bride, I could not have welcomed her more sincerely. When she caught sight of my recumbent and unpicturesque figure, she uttered a faint scream. She seemed to comprehend my whole position at once, and when after rising to my feet, I remarked, with some dignity, "Well! Mrs. Strutt, you don't know how glad I am to see you. I thought you were never coming this morning, I have been waiting hours for your appearance, as I have lost my key." When I had made these remarks, Mrs. Strutt merely said, "Lor! Mr. Growler," and I was conscious of her conviction that it was the key-hole, and not the key at all that I had lost. I undeceived her in this respect, however, by exhibiting the key to her upon the dressing-table, and the pocket-book beside it, containing the only clue to her *locus habitandi* in my possession. I took the precaution to have a warm bath, and a hearty breakfast before retiring to bed for the day; gave orders to be called at five, and then made up for my past endurance by a fine sleep, until the hour indicated.

No precautions however, saved me from a violent cough and cold. A cough which indeed seemed to threaten a speedy dissolution of the partnership so long and so amicably existant between my various component members. I was very nearly rent in twain, so violent were the exertions extorted from me, by this complaint. Added to which, frequent rheumatic warnings neither to turn my head to the right hand or the left, nor to move my arms in any direction whatever, and the result of my night's watching may be conceived in so far as bodily health is concerned. Goaded by suffering, impelled by the instinct of self-preservation, or, perhaps inspired by the fanciful *tableaux* constantly rising before my imagination, and where Dulcinea was always included in the perspective, I presently resolved upon an immediate and future course of action. I hung a bill in my window, announcing "FURNISHED CHAMBERS TO LET," and gave warning to Mrs. Strutt. Poor woman! she took it very seriously, and began to weep at the prospects of her family. Like Rachel of old, she could not think of being comforted for some time; and it was only by promising to speak for her to my successor, that I contrived to mitigate her grief at all. By way of consolation I suppose, under her anticipated hardships, Mrs. Strutt that morning relieved my tea-caddy of the greater part of its contents. Although, after witnessing her affecting explosion of tears and sobs half an hour before, I was hardly prepared for this bare-faced delinquency, I recollected that I had always allowed these depredations to go on with impunity, and never even took the precaution to look up

my tea and sugar, and that at all events it was too late now to enquire into such matters, and so let the matter pass. I resolved however, in speaking for Mrs. Strutt, should I have occasion, I would most certainly take the opportunity for a short interpleader on behalf of my successor's tea and sugar. I reflected, too, with considerable satisfaction, upon the determination I had arrived at, to make an end of these and such like petty annoyances, I hoped for ever.

I have felt it necessary to premise with these discursive and prefatory remarks, in order that my motives might be fully apparent for the change I was so suddenly induced to contemplate and carry out. It will be understood now what were my sufferings, and it will readily be guessed what was my remedy. But let me not anticipate the sequel of my story. My chambers soon let, and a term was fixed for the duration of my solitude. I began to repent upon my haste, and a foreboding of ill seemed to cross my mind. I remained firm to my determination, however, and began to look about me seriously for some new home, after the pattern which I had conceived in my own mind. I looked daily through the advertisements, and weighed candidly the advantages of every announcement, "Church of England Principles."—"The Methodist Persuasion"—"Regular Hours and intelligent Society"—"Domestic Retirement," &c., &c. I fixed upon the following, and straightway answered thereto.

AN OPPORTUNITY now occurs for a BACHELOR desirous of cultivating the social pleasures of domestic life. An agreeable home, surrounded with comforts, and enlivened with *many attractions*, may be secured, where music, conversation

and society will serve to dissipate loneliness, and promote rational enjoyment. Dinner hour, five o'clock. Address—E. S., &c., &c.

In my lacerated mental condition, this appeal seemed absolutely irresistible, and I accordingly hoped that I might be so fortunate as to have written in time. I was so fortunate, and in due course of post, received a very glossy letter, containing all information as to terms, advantages, accommodation, and many other particulars, which to me were perfectly startling. The place seemed a genuine Paradise, and as by the note, I was given to understand that "the fullest enquiry was courted, and the favour of a call desired," I determined to set out for Bosphorus Cottage, Pine Apple Place, at once, and convince myself by ocular demonstration, as to the likelihood of this place giving me satisfaction. After getting into the neighbourhood, and making Bosphorus Cottage (as my friend the skipper would say) I was rather puzzled who to ask for, as the female scrawl which I had received, though carefully penned, still defied my efforts to deduce a meaning in many parts, more especially the name, which seemed to be as nearly as I could decypher it "Lobster," or "Crabstick." I took the latter at a venture, and marching boldly up to the door, thumped trippingly upon its dedolent bosom. The maid replied and answered my enquiries for Mrs. Crabstick, by inviting me on to the mat withinside, where after giving my explanations, I was kept waiting a season, while Mrs. Crabstick, I supposed, was preparing for my ceremonious reception.

I was at length invited into the front parlour. A

neat room, comfortably furnished, though not in the most modern style. I was alone, and had time for a general observation of the apartment, which looked of course over the miniature front garden, into Pine Apple Place. A bookcase, garnished with venerable looking volumes, occupied one corner, an easy chair, with an elaborate anti-macassar, stood by the fire-place, two Berlin-wool stands with work, were covered up on one side, and a cottage-piano filled up the corresponding space on the other. The whole arrangements presided over by two personal insults of some family ancestors (a male and female) in the shape of a "portrait of a lady" and a gentleman respectively. These portraits alarmed me. If the flesh and blood descendants at all resembled the canvass-representations of the original stock, it was plain that I was doomed. My reflections were however cut short by the appearance, through the folding-doors, of the lady of the house. As she entered I rose; we mutually inclined from the perpendicular and returned to it again; after which, I caught the following sounds, as they floated from the lady's mouth—

—Growler—visit—pleasure—seat—

I bowed, said "Thank you," and seated myself.

—Afraid—waiting—servant—tell—long?

As this sentence finished with a rising inflection, I replied, that I had only just arrived, which seemed to be the answer required, and proved satisfactory.

—Called—subject—note—pleased—desire.

I was bewildered now, as a rejoinder was evidently *expected*. Whether my note in answer to the adver-

tisement, or the letter in reply to mine, had been referred to I could not divine; but after a slight hesitation, I began to explain the object of my visit, and enlarged upon the subject of lodgings in general, the horrors of chambers, and my own particular desire to be received into the genial bosom of some delightful family, where I might henceforth cease to know cares, and pass a luxurious life of domestic enjoyment.

The lady's reserve and incoherence now vanished, and she forthwith opened out strongly upon Bosphorus Cottage. The vicinity of the parks, the gentility of the neighbourhood, the select circle of friends, the sylvan aspect of Pine Apple Place, the proximity of the fields and the open country, the purity of the air and the water, the rides and walks, the facility of communication with any part of town, the churches, the preachers, abroad, and the quiet and attention of a home, music and singing, friends to dinner, conversation, bed-room overlooking a heap of trees and gardens, with ivy trained all over the windows, by the careful hands of "my husband" himself, at home, were some of the numerous attractions recited to my wondering and astonished ears. I was shown round the garden, which was more roomy than usual, and I was conducted through what "my husband calls his turpentine walk" at the bottom. I saw my future dormitory, where I seemed destined at last to enjoy a night's rest, without the constant fear of being blown out of bed. We agreed upon terms at once, and I indicated the time when I should take up my abode at

this desirable residence. I began already, before the termination of the interview, to look on Mrs. Crabstick as a mother, and really regretted the time that was to intervene between my visit and the commencement of my tenancy.

I found plenty of occupation, however, for the time that remained to me. Packing up everything—then unpacking half as not being necessary—seeing the whole question in quite a different light, and then unpacking the other half—coming to another determination and making a judicious selection from the two halves—which soon after required amendment, and so on and so forth, even unto the day on which I was to go, when instead of being all right, I had not a single thing ready.

III.

Not a single thing ready, and the day arrived on which my successor was coming early to dislodge me. I laid in bed very late, reflecting upon the best measures to be adopted under the circumstances, and then started up in astonishment at the reckless manner in which I was spending the best part of the day. Mrs. Strutt was so low spirited that she could not make the water boil, and I, in that exquisite ferment, the sure diagnostic of severe nervous irritation, by way of hastening the tardy preparations for my matin's meal, must needs poke the fire. I managed in this operation to dislodge the kettle, and bring its contents bodily upon the struggling embers, of course to the total extinction of both heat and light. A volume of steam and smut enveloping, threatened me for a moment with destruction, or at least with considerable damage. I was black in the face, and the condensed steam like a cold sweat, stood upon my ghastly visage. My lawn shirt front suffered in an equal degree, and though clean that morning, in honour of the day, seemed suddenly to have arrayed itself in mourning for some departed friend. I felt that I was called upon to be patient under all that I might be exposed to suffer on that day, and I retired with an assumed calmness again to dress myself, while Mrs. Strutt was

engaged in relighting the fire, and for the second time inducing the kettle to boil.

I breakfasted at last, and was soon engaged in the serious business of the day. I had retired to my bedroom, and was surrounded with open drawers and yawning boxes, and gaping bags. I laid everything out before me, that I might cut my coat according to my cloth, or in other words, suit my contents to the dimensions of my receivers. I was settling before hand the exact mode in which everything should lay in the bags and boxes, when a lively double knock brought my operations to a stand. It must be Mr. Mottleman, my future tenant.

I hastened to the door with apologies gurgling up into my mouth. They were rammed back again however, with the force of a paving hammer, by the salutation I received,

“ Ah ! Growler, my buffalo ! Com ’il va ce giorno ? Pleasant voyage to you ! Where *have* you been to, and how do you do ?—Eh ! my buffalo, how do you do ?,,

“ Oh !” said I, with a sort of sickly resignation radiating from my face, “ Come in.” Of course my visitor is recognised. That old annoyance down upon me again. Instead of Mr. Mottleman, as I anticipated, with his luggage ; here was Gripsmill, from St. Thomas’s, who in place of attending professor Spickbone’s lecture on Clinical Surgery, or some other equally interesting topic, that morning, had done me the honour of coming to spend the day with me. *Of course* he would expect half-and-half to be sent

for. What was to be done? If I explained my situation to him, I must expose my future residence to his abominable incursions. If I said nothing, he would stop all day as usual. Plainly I must get rid of him, but as I never had yet been able to get rid of him before, how was I to do it now? It was a case of emergency, and the only expedient I could think of, was to diplomatise with him. We entered the room together.

"Well, old fellow," with a sudden slap on the back, that at once prostrates my nervous system, "what's in the wind now, eh? What cunning inventions are you going to double us up with? Mankind is waiting for you, Growler, why don't you astonish 'em?"

"Simply because I can't."

"Growler, my buffalo! you're absurd. You are not judge, jury, plaintiff and defendant too. You're not every body. Try it on. By the bye I hear you met Miss Mookins the other night, down at Kensington. Now what d'ye think of her, my boy?"

"She appeared to be a very agreeable young lady, (it was Dulcinea) but I did not see much of her."

"Ah! Growler; you shall be better acquainted. Dulcinea Mookins is a tip top girl. She is just my taste, and exceedingly partial to me. Dulcy is a prime lot, and no mistake. What do you think she says of you now?"

I was astonished and indignant at this unexpected announcement, and when the last question was asked, of course "had no idea."

"You'll be offended!"

"No!"

"Then I'll tell you. Its too smart to be lost, and will do you good to hear it. She asked me who you were, and I gave my lively description of you, as a modest man, living by the emission of original ideas, an abstracted brain raker; my good friend, with a villainous turn for reading his poetry to me, and so on. Her idea of you was, that you were much like an amiable bear, soured by indigestion; and while she felt some sort of interest in you (for my sake, my dear fellow) yet she did not think you were quite safe without a muzzle."

"Oh! you're joking!"

"No, 'pon rep' the truth. Very shrewd and clever isn't it?"

I acquiesced, and laughed as extravagantly as possible, that Gripsmill might not see anything of "the galled jade" in my behaviour.

"Well, what's up? What shall we do, and where shall we go, and who shall we see?"

"Oh! I'm going out!"

"Ah! I'll go with you."

"Excuse me. It's business."

"Wait your return, my boy; all the same to me. Send something in, as you go by the druggist's,"—kicking a pewter pot across the floor, which I was horrified to see, had not been taken out of the way by the laundress. "I'll try and get over the time till your return, and pray don't forget I'm waiting."

"The fact is, my dear fellow, I'm sorry you have *fixed upon* this day, to visit me, as I am a little un-

settled,—domestic matters—family arrangement;—my mother expected here every moment.”

“Growler! my friend and fellow citizen, you promised me an introduction. This day I claim the fulfilment, and nothing shall move me from my purpose.”

“But my good man, I——”

“Don’t say a word now; I’ll excuse everything, I know exactly what you would say”—

“But I never-promised any such thing.”

“Oh! you forget. I have a distinct recollection of it. Now you can’t get off”—

“But it is a matter of serious business, in which we shall be long engaged.”

“Then I must insist on staying to keep up your spirits, as well as the old lady’s.”

“Her solicitor is coming with her too;”—

“A lawyer! I’d just as soon read my father’s will cutting me off with a shilling, as hear a lawyer talk. They speak by the skin; and I have already got a couple of pressing invitations from sundry of the fraternity, to attend an audience of John, Lord Campbell, &c., &c.”

“I’m sorry to hear that, Grip. I suppose you’ll have to apply to your father again.”

“I must go and see what I can do with my uncle first, my boy. I’m off. I suppose if I send to you, I can depend on your friendly assistance, my dear fellow,” with a thump on the back, and a vice-like shake of the hand,—

“Oh! to be sure. Come up in a day or two, and

talk it over with me. I'm only sorry I'm not at liberty to day."

"Growler, my buffalo! You are the best friend I have. It is cruel of me to leave you;"

"No, no, don't say a word now"—

"I tear myself away"—

"Don't forget now; as soon as you can;"—

"Thanks, gentle zephyr, balmy gales of Spring! Good bye!"

"Good bye!" and the door closed upon him. I laughed, rubbed my hands, brandished the poker, danced and gloated over the achievement of his expulsion. My diplomacy had succeeded beyond my expectations; but the day was rapidly running on. I soon returned to my packing, and accomplished all that I desired before the appearance of Mr. Mottleman.

I began to fear something had happened to him, and was mentally resolving to have a cab, and be off, when at the very latest moment up he drove, baggage and all. I was relieved, welcomed him to his domicile, introduced him to all the drawers, and cupboards of the establishment, hastily ran over the principal items of the inventory with which I furnished him; and then having got all my traps packed in and about the cab that had brought him, I hastened off to Bosphorus Cottage. At last I was really *en route* for that delectable Canaan, which seemed to gleam up in my imagination like a fair distant oasis in the dreary and monotonous desert of my melancholy existence. *For once* the eternal clouds that had obscured my

career, seemed to be wafted off, and a ray of sunshine poured down its effulgent beams into my cold and lonely heart.

Away now for Bosphorus Cottage !

IV.

Away now for Bosphorus Cottage ! At last I was embarked for a "haven of rest," and while the cab navigated slowly and uneasily through the rough channels which run tortuously from the continent of London, into, by, and through the peninsula of Paddington, I indulged in a delightful pantamorphic dream. Gray's Inn seemed to be the residence of "doomed creatures," the dark and dismal nest of "owl birds," bats, and ravens ; enveloped in eternal obscurity, and oppressed merely with an atmosphere of fog. If all that is best of Shakspeare is divided into Acts, then all that is valuable in Gray's Inn is made up of Deeds ! The very buildings seem to be engrossed, and the chief inhabitants all look like great initials in black letter—incarnations of the letter **I** with a powdered top, and, on a windy day, garnished with flourishes. **I** am the Law—of the Law—in the Law—the Law—the whole Law—and nothing but the Law, is written visibly on every face in the locality. Oh ! esoteric Inn ! dim, dreary, dingy solitude ; exuberant of coifs and horse hair wigs, what is the purpose of thy foundation and existence ? To maintain by the learning of thy disciples the majesty of the Law ? What is the Law ? Reader, consult your last Bill of Costs. You *have none* ? Lucky wight, don't try for one. What

is the Law? The bond of union by which society exists, and civilization is able to progress? The interest of every man to be maintained, the interest of none to break? Ah! we may say so, but nobody knows. Nobody knows what the Law is; but a host of curious people are for ever trying to find out. The Law is a something that is continually being broken. You know what the Law is directly you have broken it, but never before. It is expensive and often inconvenient in its effects to break the Law, and therefore it is against all men's interests to be guilty of infraction. But then the Lawyers? They live by the infractions of the Law on the part of clients. Antagonists of peace, set apart to live by the infractions of the Law. Oh! would there were no Law, no Lawyers, and no Gray's Inn! And yet the time will come, when my universal set-every-thing-to-rights revolution takes place; then Lawyers will be content to discourage business, and their incomes shall increase with the diminution of litigation.

But where am I going to? Ah! Bosphorus Cottage is my destination. All men will be wise some day, even the Lawyers and the dim creatures of Gray's Inn! They will all escape from their isolation, and seek the delights of a Bosphorus cottage. Like me they will emerge into sunshine and pure air, and delight henceforth in the charms and *agremens* of social domesticity, vicinity of the parks, rides, drives, select circle, &c., &c.

But that terrible Gripsmill; he would be calling in a day or two, and find me gone. Delightful anti-

cipation ! I was relieved from the incubus of his society, and the tax of his frequent and never repaid loans. I was satisfied with my conduct, when I reflected on my escape from him. Any sacrifice was worth making to accomplish that, and now I had done it. I revelled in the idea for some moments.

And Dulcinea ; sweet though unwitting cause of all my present aurelian performances ! How ? " An amiable bear soured by indigestion ; " " not safe without a muzzle ; " — She could not say so ! Impossible ! Gross calumnies of Gripsmill. For certain yes ; yet still I must plead guilty to some barbarisms. Undoubtedly I was extravagantly bacheloresque, but it would soon wear off, and I would be industrious that it should. For I valued Dulcinea's opinion, and would not stand ill in it upon any account ; I was plastic and desirous. Bosphorus Cottage and Mrs. Orabstick would do the rest. I was going to the mill to be ground young again, and I should emerge in a short time the very thing I desired so much to be.

The vision brightened wonderfully, and I abandoned myself to the full enjoyment of all its details. There was a charming room whose walls were of a delicate apple tint, and whose adornments were a number of pictures in very gilt frames. There was a Turkey carpet on the floor ; and the scarlet curtains over the window were closely drawn. A domestic light beamed from the solar lamp around, and the brilliant fire gave an appearance of cheerfulness and happiness that was most delicious. On the table was the tea board, and *the urn steamed and hissed away with mighty vigour*

a kind of family poean suited to the occasion. Two little cherry faces, elevated somewhat above the table, beamed with tranquillity and curiosity, alternately upon the preparations making on the tea-board, and the occupant of the easy chair which skirted the hearth-rug to the right of the fire. The silence, broken only by the melodious and suppressed murmur of the urn steam, seemed absolutely sacred; and I moved my eyes with caution, lest even that should make a noise, and looked upon the two individuals on whom the children gazed with such a devout interest. I was not disappointed; one was Dulcinea—the other, Mr. Growler. My heart bounded with delight. Tears started into my eyes, the tears which alone relieve excessive joy, and stay our hearts from bursting with the thrilling shock of too much happiness. It was enough! It was too much! all I coveted, more than I deserved! Instinctively I closed my eyes, and placed my hand upon my bosom, to still the agitation of my dancing heart. Sweet vision! part not yet, let me gaze once more upon that happy shrine! Let me engrave the copy of that “Holy Family,” surpassing Raffael or Corregio, deep upon the tablets of my mind. These vivid pictures of the imagination which glance before us for a moment and are gone again for ever, do nevertheless leave an eternal impress on the mind, which memory can always refer to. These warmly coloured sketches of the possibilities of our existence, are the great promoters of our courage to meet the diverse probabilities and the cold facts of life.

I looked again. Yes, there it was all palpable and

true. I was gazing intently upon myself, some years advanced into futurity. This time the tea things were gone, and Mr. and Mrs. Growler stood before the fire, watching the joyous gambols of the cherry faced children. Sure enough it was I myself, there standing, and there joined hand to hand with Dulcinea ; joined with her in the dual unity of marriage, and with her reproduced and perpetuated, at least for one generation, in the merry little plump limbed urchins that played so delightedly on the floor. Presently, one of the two cherry faced urchins, full of laughter and affection, turned his eyes upon the face of my representative, and, having gained attention, delivered its funny little-self, with laughter, and yet with some evident anxiety as to its effect, of a funny little speech. "Pa ! I no love you." "Rogue," was the sole response. "I don't, Ma say you give me too much lobliplops." "Now mind," said the incorporeal Mr. Growler, looking comically grave, and elevating his forefinger in a most serious and threatening manner, "I'll tickle you." This seemed the very answer sought for. The child's anxiety vanished, it relaxed its tiny limbs in preparation for the sport, and then, with overbrimming fun, gurgled out its little persistence in the same assertions. The tickling commenced, and the laughter grew and grew. Both the children laughed, Mrs. Growler laughed, and Mr. Growler too. Such a long, merry, jubilant, and catching laugh it was ; it rang trippingly and sonorous into my ears, and into my heart. I laughed too, though I was in a miserable *cab* and no personal partaker in the merriment, except

by representation. I laughed too, and in the midst of the happiness and the laughter, the vision suddenly became rigid, cold, and lifeless, and then blackness blotted it out.

“ Now then, Sir. Bosp’hus Cott’ge.” I opened my eyes. The cab had stopped. I was at my destination, and expected now to alight.

The shock was a great one for me. This sudden pounce from dream-land into Pine Apple Place ; from the pleasant, joy-inspiring life of fancy, to the cold benumbing life of reality, was to me a nuisance, though to every one of my readers I fear it will be a great relief. Pardon me, dear reader, pardon me my platitudes. It is the besetting sin of my existence, that I never can come to the point. It is in the deficiency of my organization, and battle with it as I may, I cannot overcome it.

I was cordially received at Bosphorus Cottage, and soon had my luggage cleared from the cab, after which I attempted to come to some understanding with the cabman. This I found a matter of considerable difficulty, as he insisted upon charging me for bringing Mr. Mottleman from Vauxhall turnpike to Gray’s Inn, in addition to my own journey thence to Pine Apple Place. I resisted the imposition most sturdily for a long time, but the man, I am bound to say, was so unusually civil, and represented to me so forcibly the unlikelihood of finding Mottleman, a bachelor in chambers, at home at the dinner hour ; and then the resentment his governor would entertain agin him if he went home short ; as well as the privations his

family must inevitably undergo if his rightful and hard-earned money were withheld from him, that I agreed to advance him the amount he claimed, (fifteen shillings) upon the strict understanding that he would repay me if there was any mistake. It seemed a strange thing for Mottleman to commence his tenancy by making me, his landlord, pay for the cab that brought him to my chambers. The cabman averred that he did not speak on the subject as he thought it was all understood. He also said that the gen'l'man told him I was to pay for him ; an inaccuracy which did not occur to me until I reflected over the conversation which had occurred, on a subsequent occasion.

I paid him, however, and dismissed him totally satisfied ; and now let us proceed to be introduced to Bosphorus Cottage and the Crabsticks.

V.

I was housed at last, and presently made known to the various members of the family ; in which last ceremony I was undeceived as to the appellative which I had fixed upon the society of Bosphorus Cottage. I was introduced, I fancied rather severely, by Mrs. Crabstick to "my husband Mr. Scrabster ;" an announcement which immediately brought my eyes into collision with those of my amiable *cicerone*. I speak metaphorically only of course. I naturally blushed under the conviction of error, while Mrs. Scrabster rose somewhat above, perhaps, her ordinary height. With this simple incident my initiation was accomplished, and I henceforth stood discovered and recognized in my own proper person before the whole family.

The whole family consisted of the following members ; Mr. Scrabster number one, the constitutional head of the family, and legal possessor of Bosphorus Cottage : Mrs. Scrabster number A 1, head of the household, and supreme autocratrix of the entire domain : Julia the elder, and Emily the younger daughter of the aforesaid, together with Tom the only son and junior of the family. Let me not forget to mention also, that an important member of the household was one Lizzy the housemaid, and my list is complete.

It is well that something should be known of these various characters, and here therefore for the present, I must leave the hitherto sequential and minute course of narrative which I have so far adopted, and verge more into the sphere of philosophical history or biography, that I may put my readers in possession of some knowledge, which will enable them to follow more intuitively the subsequent events of my career.

I begin with Mr. Scrabster, whom I may describe as an ordinary man, indistinguishable almost from any other man, either by the cut of his coat, the sit of his hat, the shape of his boots, or the tie of his neck-cloth. In fact a very ordinary man, like all other men, and proud of it. Mr. Scrabster occupied a very comfortable clerkship in the Bank, and was entitled therefore to be considered a man of business. He talked a good deal about the "City," the rate of discount, the price of the funds, and the prospects of trade. He had no sympathy with people who did not "keep an account;" and never failed, when the opportunity occurred, to denounce all men who attempted to start in business without a capital. Mr. Scrabster read the *Times*, and if he had any decided or consistent views on politics (a subject I never could accurately determine) they were no doubt the reflex of the leading articles in that journal. If any grievance or nuisance came under the observation of Mr. Scrabster, whatever might be its nature, whether individual or general, parochial or national, he was accustomed to express his great abhorrence and profound dissatisfaction curtly thus, "It ought to be exposed in the

Times :” or “the *Times* ought to take it up.” And so if at any time opinions were uttered in his presence contrary to those of himself and the *Times*, he would refer you for correction and information to the columns of that paper, assured no doubt, that every one had as much penetration as himself, and as he had read and believed, so, of course if you read would you believe. The leading paper was indeed the leading genius of his intellect ; “his guide, his councillor and friend.” If the evening gossip turned upon any subject of the day, Mr. Scrabster was always safe to join in with what the *Times* had said upon the subject, which utterance if not final and conclusive, as it seemed to him it should be, he would sometimes defend, and sometimes leave to its fate, and go to sleep. He could never be induced to change his views, until the *Times* had itself instructed him how he should do so.

On some occasions, when he was very much beset, Mr. Scrabster would light a candle and disappear with it from the room for the evening. We used to hear him knocking nails into some part of the contents of the house, or sawing wood, or ransacking an old lumber closet, or perhaps re-arranging the furniture of a room. Mrs. Scrabster would at these times go out and signify some useful direction for the operations of the evening, which was always attended to with the profoundest respect. If we talked about books, or people unknown to the city and the *Times*, about local scenery, or personal recollections, Mr. Scrabster, remaining in the room, soon went off to sleep.

Once we drifted off into the labyrinths of a debate on popular education. Mr. Scrabster pronounced his dictum, and soon after left the room. I took up a book ; the ladies fell busily to needlework. All, was quiet ! The pot-boy of the neighbouring tavern had passed by with his accustomed yell ; the policeman had followed with his measured tread. The bubbling noise of the fire, and the scarcely audible click of the needles against the thimbles, and through the work, were the only sounds that fell upon the ear. Mr. Scrabster seemed unusually quiet this evening, but as no one else noticed that, of course I did not. I went on reading the "Excursion," and was thinking nothing of either Mr. Scrabster, or any other portion of his family. I was away travelling and speculating with the poet, now mentally following the direction of his gaze, or the pointing of his finger, and anon resting on some velvet moss bank, and seeming to listen to the words from his mouth, which I was only reading from the book. An occasional conversation, maintained by the ladies among themselves in an under tone, had entirely ceased, and the house seemed perfectly still ; when, horrible to relate, the silence was all at once dispelled by the terrific noise of the explosion of a gun. The sharp crack was unmistakeable. It was followed by a heavy fall, apparently up stairs. The ladies screamed and turned deadly pale, appealing to me with an anguished and beseeching look. I started to my feet in an instant, and snatching a candle from the table, rushed up to see what on earth could be the matter. I reached the scene of

the catastrophe. A dense fume and the pungent smell of gun-powder, confirmed my worst anticipations; nor was I at all relieved to see Mr. Scrabster stretched upon the floor, to all appearance dead, and much disfigured, with the awful instrument of death still clenched within his grasp. I was horrified. What has the man been doing? thought I. There was no blood, no wound. I spoke to him. A sigh was the only answer. Life was left at all events, and that was some comfort. I reconnoitred. The gun, an old regulation flint musket, was still hot. The window blind was pierced as though the charge had passed out that way, and the window was broken too. I was at once satisfied that it was an accident, and there seemed at present no personal injury inflicted. I spoke to the outstretched figure of Mr. Scrabster. There was still no reply, and I proceeded to sprinkle some water upon his face. He soon revived in some degree, and I helped him on to the bed.

I was called from below by Mrs. Scrabster, and having assured her there was no harm done, begged her to come up stairs to the patient. She entered the room, and upon seeing her dear lord laid out upon the bed, looking as though he would be very pale and ghastly, if his face had not been smudged over with the gunpowder-smoke and water; she uttered a lamentable ejaculation, "Oh! Sam-u-el, Sam-u-el!" and fell upon his neck and wept. I left the tender scene, and hastened down stairs to reassure the young ladies in the parlour.

It appeared afterwards, that the musket was an old

family relic, Mr. Scrabster's father having carried it, as a volunteer. It had long been kept loaded and suspended over the fire-place of Mr. Scrabster's bed room, in case of thieves, and it was Mr. Scrabster's custom from time to time, to see that the "barker" was in working condition. He had once before met with a catastrophe very similar to the present one, and Mrs. Scrabster's fears were always very much excited if she ever became aware of Sam-u-el's intention to meddle with the gun. It was now however condemned, and Mrs. Scrabster refused to sleep in the room, if that terrible instrument were not immediately banished. Her husband, poor man, could not resist. The dead faint he had fallen into on the occasion, was such an overwhelming argument against him, that he could not of course attempt to hold out, and the offending weapon was henceforth banished to the lumber closet, unloaded. The poor man had also by some means or other contrived to singe his whiskers, and completely denude his forehead of the eyebrows; which for some time gave him a most comical appearance, and, as he himself admitted, formed a staple joke against him in the city.

One trait of Mr. Scrabster's character I must not omit to mention. He was remarkably proud of his wife. I was at first inclined to believe that such a sentiment was highly becoming and generous in a husband, and one to be supported and promoted rather than not. But afterwards, when I became aware of the cost of such a vanity, I came to deprecate it, or *at all events* the absurd lengths to which Mr. Scrabster

would oftentimes carry it. And I should now be disposed to regard it as a rule, that the husband's admiration and worship lead to the wife's exaction and despotism in return.

Poor Scrabster ! I have often pitied him in his difficulties. He was lost beyond hope of amendment. From his wife, whatever the proposition, it was always undeniable. A summer trip to Ryde, or into Devonshire ; a bonnet from Ludgate Hill, or something chaste and elegant for the girls' evening dresses from Regent Street ; all were to be compassed without trouble from the tractable Mr. Scrabster. He would order in joints from the butcher's, or send a young man round from the haberdasher's with a huge bundle of goods for inspection, or carry a band-box, or paper parcel, with him into the city with the greatest complacency. He would leave home without breakfast in the morning (generally after being out late the night before with the ladies) ; he would put up with cold dinners, or no dinners at all, on his arrival from the city, if it were to favour the convenience of his wife ; and he submitted in divers manners and in various degrees to all sorts of troubles and trials ; indeed, to all sorts of exactions and contrivances upon him, simply from the reason, that he had so much admiration of his wife and of her doings. Beware, oh ye men ! Whoso among ye will commit matrimony, let him have a care for his own self. Whoso among ye will take a wife, let him take her unto his heart, and to his home, an equal. Equal to his greatest love, equal to his highest honours. Before all things consider that

equality is the firmest bond of love. Eschew worship and adoration, shun dictation and domination. For these assumptions spring from superiority or inferiority, and engender haughtiness, pride, and reserve on the one hand ; submission, resignation, and formality on the other. These are but the simulations of love, and though the false and the true may be indistinguishable to common observation, the difference in effect is mighty and inevitable !

Scrabster was essentially an amiable man, good-natured and so forth ; but he was nevertheless a man of whom you felt bound, even with a little severity, to say to yourself (after a short acquaintance) that he was a stupid one. Perhaps it was the natural tendency of his experiences, or rather his want of experiences to make him so. He seemed to go through life on crutches as it were. The *Times* and his wife, were the two stools, between which he had lost the little balance of independence he may at any time have possessed. His occupation as a clerk in the Bank had gradually, perhaps, but thoroughly enough, rendered him a mere flesh and blood mechanism for the compilation of figures and the enumeration of bank notes and specie. His thoughts were extremely limited in their range. If he missed a sovereign in his balance, or had a five pound note too much, he would think how it was, or where it might be gone to. He used sometimes to say he thought it would be wet to-day, and he should take an umbrella with him ; or he thought it would be fine, and he would leave his over-coat at home. He thought sometimes too, when he was very hungry.

what there was likely to be for dinner ; but this tendency of thought always received a severe check from Mrs. Scrabster, and was of course but seldom indulged. Speculation was quite foreign to his mind, and perhaps if Mr. Scrabster had known me to be a speculator, and a speculator often with other people's ideas, he would have regarded me as a highly dangerous character, and treated me with as little ceremony as a Capel Court stag, or an Old Bailey criminal condemned for malversation of another's property.

VI.

I am now about to attempt a vast undertaking, and feel not a little the painful deficiencies under which I labour. I desire to picture forth the personality and idiosyncrasy of a woman ; and, inasmuch as I am of the other sex, and consequently of different habits, manners, and constitution, and, furthermore, as I am, and have ever been, a recluse in single blessedness, and so have had less opportunity for close observation and experience than many of my compeers, I feel that my delineation must necessarily be very imperfect. It is impossible for an artist to realize upon canvass an idea which he cannot appreciate, or to represent an object which he does not thoroughly understand ; and, as it seems agreed now-a-days, that one sex never will understand the other, so it follows that their portraits of each other must be deficient. Talking on this subject to a friend one day, I was amused by his argument ; “Women, Growler,” said he, “are the eternal sphinxes of the living generation. You cannot understand their motives of action, their springs of thought ; you may attempt to read the mystery of their difference from ourselves, and sometimes, in a fit of uncontrollable love, a woman seems on the point of revealing to you the grand secret—but no ; a sudden impulse surely checks her purpose, and the puzzle rests unsolved. *It is impossible for a man to understand a woman.*

You cannot tell why a duck says 'quack,' and were you to ruminate upon that subject for a life you could not find the reason. But if you were suddenly to become a duck, the whole question would undoubtedly open out before you in a moment ; and so if a man would thoroughly read the character of a woman, he must become a woman before he could do it." This, though a most unsatisfactory conclusion, borders nevertheless, I fear, upon the truth, and helps me to some degree of complacency in commencing my portrait, which being taken from the life, shall be as perfect a fac-simile of the original as my humble powers of mere limning can make it.

Mrs. Scrabster was a majestic woman. Tall, portly, proud, dignified, severe, complaisant, complacent, calm, agreeable, but dangerous ; haughty to strangers, as though it were desirable that first impressions should be *stamped* upon the mind ; affable or reserved to acquaintances and friends, as policy or circumstances seemed to dictate ; intelligent : much seeking after " genteel society ;" courteous and insinuating towards " nice people," such as the clergyman of the neighbouring chapel, a broken down baronet of Irish extraction, who lived with his family hard by, and an old General of the French Imperial army, who resided in a double exile, out of his own country and almost out of life, in a detached villa of Pine Apple Place.

Mrs. Scrabster was profuse in her expenditure ; careful of appearances ; careless of resources. Hence the necessity of seeking to recruit a somewhat over-drawn exchequer, and hence my advent unto Bos-

phorus Cottage ; I resided there as a friend and visitor. Mrs. Scrabster was amiable in her family, and unflinching in the maintenance of her position. Her authority indeed was fully established, and never even questioned. Once, when a sturdy tradesman, who had more than once been put off, calling at the Cottage in a very dogged temper, demanded to see the master of the house, he was shown into the parlour, and confronted accordingly by Mrs. Scrabster, who reproached and rated the man for his intemperate behaviour, and laid before his naturally benevolent mind such a thrilling picture, of the severe and unexpected trials which Mr. Scrabster had suffered, from sudden calamities, pecuniary reverses, and domestic afflictions, that the man not only begged pardon most sincerely for his visit, and repudiated any intention of being "hard upon the poor gentleman," but actually asked permission of Mrs. Scrabster to continue serving the house as before, with the articles of his particular trade, and shook her hand very warmly (which Mrs. Scrabster suffered) at parting, as a testimony of his deep sympathy in the family misfortunes.

She might be said to have the eye of a hawk, which she had the power of fixing upon you, till you positively writhed under its influence. It would dive into you like a cheese scoop, and bring out a sample from the very heart of you. With this was united the temper and sleek dangerous beauty of a panther. The analogy perhaps may not be readily understood, and I must refer, unfortunately, to the future, for a *more complete* solution. In my meditated "Diction-

ary of Character," one book or more will certainly be devoted to the classification of women under their dominant characteristics, such as the pantherine, of which Mrs. Scrabster is an instance, the pavine, the parrotine, the agnuscine, &c., &c., of which perhaps I may have somewhat more to say by and bye.

Although Mrs. Scrabster was intelligent, and possessed of a certain degree of penetration, she was, nevertheless, spoilt, as most of the women of this age are spoilt, by a defective education. It was to me quite painful to reflect, as I often did, what a difference would have resulted to the household and family fortunes of her spouse, had she endured a different training in early years. The traces of school and education are indelible in life, and it is of the greatest importance that early impressions should be good, and early habits rational. Mrs. Scrabster "never went into the kitchen, of course," that was the domain of the cook, and genteel ladies like herself, did not understand the management, much less the details, of such a place; she preferred to lounge in the parlour over the last volumes from the library, or engage with "the girls," in the invention of some little elegance in the shape of a head dress, an anti-maccassar pattern, or a berlin wool prodigy. She would as soon have thought of investigating the nature and art of making pies and puddings, as she would have thought of taking a hammer, and pursuing a geological inquiry into the character of the Old Red Sandstone. To make an oyster sauce would have been to her, about as formidable an undertaking as an oyster dredging

expedition ; while the mysteries of a simple soup or a plain dinner, would have been of far too composite a character for her very genteel understanding. It was the same throughout the arrangements : precisely as a thing was useful, was the genteel woman ignorant of it. With a trio of servants, " the washing was put out," and the plain needlework too. " It encouraged those poor creatures of whom one hears," now and then at Exeter Hall, and of whom one sees so much in the advertisements of the newspapers, as being under the patronage of a Distressed Needlewomen's Society, with offices in a fashionable west-end street, and a benevolent nobleman, or a rising plebeian of devout turn and easy circumstances, as chairman. Hemming, darning, sewing, running, or basting stitches, were as mystic to her apprehension as a treatise upon the Greek indefinite article ; but in those modern books, written in an occult language, such as, " Pearl 2 + slide 5—take up 3 + make 1—0—turn under 4," and other similar cabalistic phraseology, she was deeply read, and profoundly learned. The ornamental trophies, which the ladies amongst them accomplished in prodigious quantities, of course far surpassed the wants or accommodation of an establishment like Bosphorus Cottage, and so all these achievements found their way to some fancy fair, or benevolent bazaar, and thus encouraged the building of some new church, the opening of new fields to missionary enterprise, or the subsidizing of additional curates, under the special sanction of the lawn Lords in the upper of the two *houses* of the legislature.

Lamentable to think, that with all this, Mrs. Serabster's inoffensive and meek husband had a difficulty in paying his way! He could not govern, nor restrain, nor guide the occupations of his wife, and he would have been "a wretch indeed," if he could have begrudged the money that went for such amiable purposes, in as small quantities, perhaps, but quite as rapidly and drainingly as the sand runs through the hour-glass.

How it ever was that such a strangely contrasted couple should have joined together in the indissoluble bond of matrimony was long a puzzle to me. But from sundry confessions on the one side and the other, I at last arrived at the whole secret. The husband and wife were children and playmates together in the same country village. They had parted to go to school, and had lost sight of each other for years. The child, in the one case, had emerged from the chrysalis of school and commercial apprenticeship, to take his stand in the world, or rather his seat on the official stool, as a bank-clerk, in which position he settled down for life. After his appointment, he paid a visit to the old village of his childhood. He found all the same as before, and yet all different, for the age, which had accumulated but lightly upon himself, had also more or less marked everything and every one he recollected. Emily, his former playmate, was still in the village, and still single. Injudicious and foolish-loving parents had given her a high-polish, modern, elegant-accomplishment, and showy education, which being the rage amongst the middle classes of

the town populations, was deemed good for Emily. But it had the effect of inspiring her with a contempt for the clodhoppers of the country, and it also had the effect of warning off a number of suitors of a sterling sort, who would, but for this flaunty, superficial style, with which her education had endowed her, have found in her a wife suitable to their taste. Emily then, buried in the country, lost to the charms of society, and almost despairing of "an opportunity," was suddenly accosted by the amiable Scrabster, on his visit of recognition, and "the chance," thus presented to her was not lost. The sequel is manifest. Part of it is the production of these chapters.

VII.

Julia and Emily, the two daughters of Samuel and Emily aforesaid, might respectively be classified under the heads "pavine" and "agnuscine." Dark hair, angular, though well-formed features, thin lips, superb teeth, and bright piercing eyes having a tendency to repose and reflection rather than to motion and animation; combined with hautiness of carriage, a formal minuteness of ceremony, a scrupulous attention to dress, and a peculiar scornful inclination of the lip and nose, were the characteristics of the former, who was called in playful sarcasm by her particular favourite the Irish baronet, "the daughter of her mother," in contra-distinction to her sister, who according to the same humorous authority, one fine day in the park, "was her father's portrait framed in curls, and made up in Leghorn." Julia was cold, precise, but always agreeable, as nearly as possible a reproduction in all respects, a "new edition, with the latest additions and improvements," of the maternal character. Emily, on the other hand, was an auburn haired, Saxon-featured, diamond-eyed, merry-lipped, rosy-cheeked *blonde*, singing and laughing all the day; the most froward, piquant, careless little virgin, who unconsciously and insensibly achieved the conquest of all hearts, by her very helplessness and impracticability; which of course betrayed her into continual and bewildering

misfortunes, scrapes and dire calamities, out of which she never failed to be rescued, by the magnetism of an appealing look from those arch eyes of hers, or the electric influence of her smiles and laughter. She had no fears, no cares, a latent conscience, a heart contented, full of innocence and joy, vivacity and artlessness, so charming and dazzling, that it was almost instinctive, to trace mentally an aureola above her head, or ascribe an aroma to the enchantments of her presence. Docile, ductile, loving, lovable Emily, the perfection of woman, so intensely captivating and dependent, she seemed to me every morning as though she had fallen bright and spotless from the skies, with the last night's dew !

But I am culling flowers from the Eden of memory, when I ought to confine myself to Pine Apple Place, and the narrative in hand. It is the nature of man—to wander from his subject, and “when a lady’s in the case, all things else of course give place !” It is necessary, perhaps, to have some understanding. We have travelled over many pages, and do not appear to make any headway, and still there is Lizzy, the prettiest specimen of “parrotine” loquacious good-tempered *soubrette* I ever saw off the stage, and of whom I have not yet said one word, beyond an announcement of her actual existence ; and Tom, the pet son, the juvenile scion and presumptive heir to all the honours of the family name ; a Byron-collared, clothes-consuming, sportive, and at times troublesomespecimen of “Young Paddington.” Well, reader ! I confess *the enormity*. It is true I have beguiled you thus far,

and our goal appears as distant as ever. I feel that I was hasty in volunteering to guide you through such a wilderness of adventure, such a morass of reflections, and I will be honest enough to inform you, that I have still lanes of anecdotes and mazes of moralities, through which I am compelled to take you before we part company. But do not accuse me of rhapsodizing a young lady, and stringing graceful sentences in honour of my sweetheart. You mistake. Dulcinea was my "lamp of life," and "guiding star." The affection I bore to Emily, had somewhat of the paternal in it, more certainly of the patriarchal and eremitical, than of the fraternal or hymeneal. Do not anticipate me ! You cannot foresee the catastrophe, though you may fancy you have it all cut and dried. And now buckle up the belt of resolution, and follow me steadily and patiently. I cannot dictate to you of course, but I would suggest that if you wish to "know my story," you had better not interrupt the even tenor of my recital, but read calmly and philosophically on, abandoned entirely to the interesting events I have to describe.

But you do not understand my terminology, and we are likely to become involved in an irretrievable mystification. It is one of the misfortunes of language, that while we are struggling heroically to explain our ideas, we always fail to accomplish our object. The more we explain, the more we conceal, and for every sentence we write, pages remain behind,

"And in the lowest deep, a lower deep
Still threat'ning to devour me, opens wide."

But by way of attempt at further elucidation, the pavine character is that which attracts admiration by superficial adornment and outward display ; the green and blue, and black and gold, in plumage ; the Juno neck, and stately gait, and splendid train all painted eyes and ears, as though to see and gather in the homage of the crowd. The agnuscine is not so beautiful—far more winning ; it is soft, domestic, timid, mild and meek ; not imposing like the other, but ingratiating, prepossessing, lovable and womanly. The parrotine again, is showy, comely, homely, brilliant, but withal pert and noisy.

By way of illustration I recollect the “Black Beetle Tragedy” as we christened it. Scene—the breakfast parlour, at the breakfast hour ; all the members of the family present, and variously engaged at the table, as “ministers of the interior.” Oddly enough, the conversation had turned upon the adulteration of food, and the ladies were highly indignant and alarmed, to hear of the monstrosities which had been brought to light upon the subject.

Mrs. Scrabster had never heard of such a thing before in all her life. It was monstrous, and she certainly should give immediate orders, for “cook” to make the strictest enquiries, before admitting anything into the house for the future.

Julia was not much surprised at it, although it was truly horrible. Tradesmen were really such a low, vulgar set of persons, that she believed they were capable of anything.

Emily wondered what it was for, and what the cus-

tomers could have done to deserve such adulterated treatment. They might over-dose us some day, and serve us all like "Fair Rosamonds," without any of the romance to make up a ballad and carry the doleful tale to future generations. Really she fancied the coffee was not so good as usual this morning,—a remark which bore too closely on the home department, and met with reproof accordingly ; but it might be only for the want of another lump of sugar, and Mamma would perhaps allow her to try. Mamma did allow and the remedy proved effectual. Our fears subsided.

Mr. Scrabster held it to be a vicious system, and there had been some rattling articles in the "Times," upon the subject, which he had no doubt would have the desired effect.

Mr. Growler was pondering intently upon the nature of eggs, analyzing one hard-boiled, with the help of a spoon, and mentally proposing whether there might be any cause in nature, for these French imitations so detestably unlike the fresh laid originals ; or whether they really were to be pronounced artificial. Mr. Scrabster's remark had been followed by a pause, when Mr. Growler perceiving the gap, went into the subject with a jerk, remarking that he had understood, the tradesmen were in the habit of serving pure articles to the customers who took credit, lest anything should go wrong, and the interest which they had acquired in a customer's family might disagreeably cease and expire.

This remark smothered the subject of course, and to cover my confusion I cut a thick slice of bread. In doing this very gravely and deliberately, I cut down

the body of a defunct beetle, buried in that particular part of the loaf. Had I accidentally cut down the figure of a human being, I could not have been more horrified, for the sight of such reptiles, dead or alive, invariably lets loose a whole swarm of imaginary sympathetic polypeds, to race up and down my whole superficies. That mischievous Tom, sitting near and mistaking the nature of the "deposit," began to hum "Little Jack Horner," pointing with his finger to the supposed plum on which my gaze was rivetted. The matter was soon understood, and what seemed a good joke to Tom, did not in the same manner affect the other witnesses, for the "creeping sensation" which soon subsided in myself, seemed to be communicated round the table.

"Oh, Lud!" said Mrs. Scrabster, "what a careless man that baker must be? What a very improper way of making bread! What a dreadful thing to live in a house infested with such creatures!"

Emily had uttered a delicate approach to a scream at the proper moment, and now declared that the discovery had made her so faint that she could eat no breakfast.

Julia suggested that another loaf would obviate such a necessity, and relieve them all from the disagreeable influence such an occurrence naturally produced. But Emily dreaded that the next loaf might contain another specimen of the loathsome tribe, and at least it came from the same place, where no doubt the horrid things were in the habit of running up and down the heaps of flour, and crawling over every loaf

that was made there. The creeping things were no doubt habitually kneaded up and embalmed in crust like the mummies of old. It was too much for her. She had no ambition to pursue the researches of Mr. Layard in such a direction, and she would retire.

With this, Emily reclined upon the sofa, and for a moment covered her face with her hands, as though to expunge the subject from her presence.

It occurred to me, that this was a sort of commonplace accident, that of necessity "would happen in the best regulated bakehouses, and that there was no occasion for alarm, as the beetle was really a harmless reptile after all, and it was currently believed, if not actually true, that one of our most favourite "relishes," the well known soy, was made from beetles' wings.

"Pray, Mr. Growler," remonstrated Julia, "do not continue the subject. It is remarkably inopportune." Emily had nearly brought me to her side on the sofa, by her very suggestive condolences, but you will really drive me away altogether.

I was about to regret my unfortunate remark, and had commenced, "It is the nature of man"—when Lizzy having been summoned to the scene of action, appeared before the table and interrupted the current of conversation.

"Elizabeth," solemnly said, Mrs. Scrabster, "bring up another loaf. Take this down with you, and tell cook to send it back to the baker, with my compliments."

Elizabeth said, "Yes, m'm," and looking to see what was the cause of so much magnanimity towards the offending tradesman, exclaimed in continuation, "Lor'!

it's a blag beekle. Ugh ! the nasty thing ! Yes, m'm. The baker's man says, they are swarmed with em, and he shouldn't wonder if the mice and beekles between 'em was to walk off with the loaves whole, and the flour by the sack, if their holes were big enough to drag'em into. Yes, m'm,"—and away she went, leaving the company behind, dumb from the effect of this hammer-like announcement.

Presently afterwards, breakfast proceeding uninterrupted, I turned my eyes towards the sofa ; Emily was wrapt and gazing with an earnest melancholy expression full upon my face. So intent was her study, that it was a moment before she seemed aware of my regards. I could almost fancy she was daugerreotyp-ing my picture. At last perceiving me smile (and blush I hope) which I did involuntarily, and of course blandly, she also gently smiled, and turned her head away. I was surprised rather at this incident, but quashed the "maybes" and the "mightbes," that immediately began to bubble up, on to the calm surface of my thoughts, by asking her if she could not rejoin us, to finish her meal.

She replied, only by a shake of the head.

The rest of the family pressed her, but without effect, and as a last resource, I assured her that if she were not really, as I feared, unwell, she would confer a great pleasure on me, if she would come back, and eat something more.

Without a word in reply, she came to the table, and finished her meal.

Mamma and *Julia* were puzzled. I could perceive

this although not a word was said. I was not only disappointed at the effect of my invitation, but absolutely amazed at the necessary inference which I seemed obliged to draw. But either because she perceived that too strong an impression had been made, or from the very force of her nature, Emily carried on during the remainder of the meal, such a lively and graceful coquetry, as entirely to dispel any forebodings which had momentarily entered my mind, and left me more involved than ever as to the meaning of that smile, which had aroused a feeling of alarm within me.

Persuaded that it was but diversion between the "giddy girl" and the "sober student," Julia and mamma considerably rallied us on the occasion, and even Mr. Scrabster, for once, almost forgot his usual topics, and went so far as to say, that we were "a funny couple," and to see us together rating or complimenting one another so profusely, reminded him of the story "the *Times*" had quoted the other day, about the marriage of "Thunder and Butter."

It will be as well to remark, that the date of the Black-beetle tragedy, was some three months after my arrival at Bosphorus Cottage.

VIII.

Such was the family into which it was my fortune to be introduced. The change was both delightful and beneficial. The gloom and despondency which had accumulated within me, gradually thawed and dissipated in such a congenial atmosphere, and the mere change of geographical position and physical circumstances, bringing me more into the sunlight, combined to change the tints of the picture of life and the world, which the studious mind is so fond of contemplating. Where before all seemed dark, dreary and monotonous, it was possible now to perceive rays of sunshine, patches of verdure, and a glow of hope. My health improved with my spirits, and I abandoned myself to the current of events, that so excellent a disposition might develop its due effects. I availed myself of most of the advantages which Bosphorus Cottage so abundantly supplied. The ladies were almost my daily companions in a walk round the park, or into the proximate fields ; sometimes we ventured to aspire to horse exercise together, there being great facilities in the neighbourhood for the hire of such commodity ; and occasionally we went out altogether, in a glass coach or open barouche, to join some quiet picnics, to which we were now and then invited. Our evenings, quietly and agreeably spent, grew pleasanter as we

became better acquainted. A friend, or sometimes two or three friends joined us at the entertainment of dinner, and prevented us from wearing down into monotony. Our life was that of calm and unostentatious pleasure. The whole family appeared devoted to my personal service from Mr. Scrabster, who invariably asked, before leaving every morning, whether there was any thing he could do for me in the city? Or rather, I should say from Mrs. Scrabster, who after her husband had left, and the ruins of the breakfast were being swept away, generally consulted me as to whether I could offer any suggestion on the subject of the dinner for the day—down to Tom, who always asked if he should knock at my door at four o'clock the next morning, and have the pleasure of my company on a fishing excursion; or Lizzy, who looked after my linen, and promoted unwonted polish upon my hat, boots, and coat. Lizzy was indeed an inestimable servant; and as far as I was concerned, a terror to my loose buttons, and one whose needle seemed speedily to swallow up and consume the holes which erewhile remained unchecked—"poor, poor dumb mouths," that plead a bachelor's cause most eloquently, or ruin his temper most irretrievably.

I could not but enjoy myself, and the liking which was manifest in the household for myself I returned in full, as far as feeling was concerned. But it would be wearisome to narrate the occurrences of my sojourn, and a general idea of our pursuits and occupations is sufficient. My mornings were devoted to reading, alone, while the ladies practised on the piano, skimmed

through the last importations from the library, or pursued the usual feminine occupations of berlin wool and other fancy needlework. After luncheon, weather permitting, an airing ; weather not permitting, a conversation, further retirement or otherwise, as disposition might incline us. After dinner, conversation, music, reading, riddles, or other diversion. Sometimes, though rarely, we visited a theatre, or "assisted," as the phrase runs, at a concert. In one way or other, agreeable occupation was found as the days and the hours glided softly and swiftly along ; and like the "busy bee" of "improving" memory, we "gathered honey all the day from every opening flower."

But I was born under the patronage of malignant fairies, and the star of Tantalus, or some other evilly disposed planet, presided at the ceremonial of my introduction to the public of this world. "The opening bud doth blossom to decay," as my young poet friend continually says, and true enough the axiom was, when applied to the "opening buds" of my hopes and joys, for they seemed to decay even before they blossomed, as though the "canker" waited his opportunity, and just when the bud was about to burst into a happy blossom, he gave one gnashing bite and brought the joyful promise to some "preposterous conclusion." People often tenderly wonder at the "tinct of sadness" on my visage, at the melancholy and grave turn of my disposition. If they could but make the acquaintance of "my friend," the incorporeal genius who leans over my shoulder through life, and orders off every dish from *the feast of life*, like Sancho Panza's physician, their

wonderment would cease. I *do*, it is true ; and I know what is the difference between good and bad, rational and stupid ; but I *do*, because the spirit treads on my toes, or pinches me into submission against my will and judgment. This is the secret of my misfortunes. Monodelph, the impalpable companion of my days, ever since I (at his instigation) declared my total disbelief in ghosts, glories in my misfortunes. He is my tyrant, though I do not believe in him, and I am his slave, though of course he tells me I am a free man. I am the victim of his treachery through life, he is the cold sardonic satirist of my deeds, which he knows well enough are his own, though of course attributed to me. Amidst all the medley of delights, I was a sort of Gorgon, turning the gaze that turned on me in sport, to stone. If we ever went to the theatre, it was sure to be I who was sobbing for relief, and sputtering out " Beautiful ! Beautiful !" between the gushes of my tears, till the indignant audience called " Shame !" " Turn him out !" " Throw him over !" and either quashed my enjoyment of the play, or drove me from the scene of action altogether. Whenever I went to a pic-nic, there was always somebody who had his clothes torn, in the most awkward and conspicuous places, and that somebody, was always myself. As a matter of politeness, I was often asked to sing, and having cultivated the art in younger days, and having besides a very choice portfolio of vocal music, I was, as a matter of politeness, sometimes obliged to comply with the request. The piece would generally go on smoothly, till Monodelph pressed on the

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æosophagus, and produced, in place of the proper tone, a piercing note, which I felt must damage the digestion of every one present, and of course deranged me through the remainder of the song. Compliments showered in upon me on such occasions, which I knew were undeserved, and made me writhe as much as the quiet bitter laughter of the confidential enemy over my shoulder, who slowly and spitefully grinds out between his inorganic teeth—"You *know* you deserve all these praises ; your B sharp is such a grand production now, (the very note whereat I had been deranged) could you not oblige the company with an encore ? I'll help you."

But all this sort of behaviour and mis-adventure was to be expected in a man, coming out of Chaos into Cosmos for the first time at a mature age. And I must confess, that I think I did somewhat improve during my residence at the cottage. But the cause of this "twist" in my relations with the great world outside of me was beyond the reach of any such medicine, and I have little doubt that the most accomplished doctor, who might ever take me in hand, would after a little examination pronounce my case incurable and hopeless. However that may be, I had so much to learn, at the time of which I am writing, without even so much as a "primer" to guide me in my education.

"It is the nature of man"—said I, in the midst of a grave conversation one day—"It is the nature of man to love trifles ; and as a mental food, trifles surpass in virtue every ervalenta that has yet been *invented*—men love trifles." Emily looked very seri-

ously at me, and in an under tone, asked, "Am I a trifle, Mr. Growler?"

I assured her, that I had not made any personal allusion.

But seriously she persisted, "Am I a trifle?"

Driven up in a corner, I at last said "No, to be sure not."

"But why? Why am I not, why may I not be a trifle? What! Mr. Growler, am I then never to be loved, and meet the fate I deserve, as you yourself have often said? Surely you are inconsistent, or am I in reality so much unlike the trifles in general, that engage the affections of mankind? I suppose, like Beatrice, I am sunburned, and may sit up in a corner and cry, Heigho! for a husband."

"You are too close in your questions, Milly," chimed in Julia. "We know very well that the lords of the creation have set us down for trifles long ago, and will not receive any other impression of us. Mr. Growler is too polite to make a personal subject of it, but you may quiet your forebodings. Your turn will doubtless come."

"Yes, to be sure," rejoined I—"to be sure, Miss Emily: and then recollect how precious trifles become by loving them, and how by fostering and attention the meanest trifles often become the rarest gems of 'bigotry and virtue,' as Plato or Horace Walpole, or somebody else says. You are a trifle; and may you live to become the greatest and most precious trifle of your time, say I."

I must not forget to say, that I contrived to make

the Scrabsters acquainted with my friends at Kensington, and visits were occasionally interchanged between them. I never could persuade them to acquire the friendship of Dulcinea however, and the only opportunities I had of cultivating this dear affection, were afforded in my visits to the Wesneys', and then not very often. The thing did not prosper, and although I occasionally had long conversations with her, I was never satisfied with the progress I made, nor indeed the conduct I had exhibited, when I came to reflect upon the matter afterwards.

It sometimes happened that I was left in the house alone. The family had gone to an interesting meeting, or to a friend's house, whither I could not, or would not, accompany them. On such occasions, restored to solitude and retirement again, how the old spirit would steal across my senses, and tempt me to the indulgence of a pipe! Lizzy was my friend, and she managed it. In a moment of despair, having told my wants to her sympathizing ear, she soon found me in materials and opportunity to have a hearty smoke, while she amused me by scandalizing all the members of the household, myself into the bargain, making up all sorts of impossible motives for their doings, and founding all manner of fanciful adventures as their sequence. "You may depend upon it, Mr. Growler, it's as true as I'm here. I say Miss Emily and Miss Julia too, are both touched, and if you can't see it, I can, I assure you. Do you think they mean nothing by giving you flowers every morning, or reading the *books* you talk about, before any others, or drawing

the pictures you like best, or singing the songs that are your favourites? Ah! Mr. Growler! I'm sure when I look at you, I always think what a pity it is that such a man as you are, don't know more about the world you're got into. Oh! bless you, I understand all them things, I can tell you. I should think so. But I'll never believe but what you're engaged to one of them, and I'll find out which it is, too. Oh! Mr. Growler, I'm afraid you're very deep." So Lizzy ran on indefinitely, occasionally interrupted by my denials and asseverations, alternately amazing and alarming me, as I puffed.

IX.

When Lizzy talked on in this fashion, at random as it seemed to me, I did not believe her, and when she would sometimes rattle on, till she cried with the very extravagancies which she invented, and persisted, that light hearted as she seemed, she had many troubles to contend against, and was more particularly at that time "very unhappy;" then, as I told her (to the manifest increase of her desolation and her tears) I could not believe her: and when she further informed me, that she knew of something which was going to happen, which would convince me of her truth, I flatly declared that I would not believe her.

But Lizzy was right, I believe, after all. A "something" did happen. On entering my room one evening, I found upon the dressing table, a small parcel, neatly made up, and directed to myself. Full of curiosity at the circumstance, I opened the packet and displayed to my astonished vision, a handsome set of studs and a rose, with a note, on which was written the legend "The flower of the heart and the adornment of a bosom—for the heartsease." I ruminated a long time, thinking to whom I could have given a heartsease at any time, but was not able to recall the event at all. It did not occur to me till afterwards, *that the word might have been intended metaphorically,*

and I simply set the matter down as very strange, and said nothing about it to any one. On another occasion, shortly afterwards, I found a very handsome crotchet purse, in one of my drawers, and that I might have no doubt of the ownership of it, a scrap of paper was enclosed addressed to me, and accompanied as before with a very perplexing epigraph "Silence is sometimes more significant than the most expressive eloquence." Both these writings were in a feigned hand, and different from each other, though to my mind both emanating from the same source. I was puzzled at these events, as well as grieved, for they seemed to indicate too plainly that some one, and that too in the house, fancied, or was trying to make herself believe, that she was in love with me. This was the only significance I could attribute to the presents, and a most embarrassing significance it was. I conceived it to be my duty, to remonstrate with the deluded damsel, whenever I might be able to discover who she really was, and having devised a stratagem to assist me in this respect, I forthwith put the same into practice.

I brought out my purse, under some pretence, the next morning at breakfast, and watched the effect upon the two young ladies. Neither of them spoke, but Julia looked at me enquiringly, as though she would have said, "Do you know who that came from?" I looked back as significantly as circumstances allowed, silently recording, "Yes, now I do; I set down you as the culprit."

It being a fine morning, I asked Julia, after breakfast, if she would take my arm for a short stroll in the

garden, to which she readily consented. That we might be more retired from observation, I led her to the "turpentine walk" at the bottom, and when there, immediately opened the subject at my heart.

"Miss Julia, you appeared to admire my very elegant purse, this morning, and I thought you wished to ask me whence it came."

"You are quite right," responded Julia, "I did."

"I am inclined to think, Miss Julia, that you know more of the history of the purse than I can tell you."

"Indeed! What do you mean?"

"Am I not in reality indebted to you for it?"

"You certainly are not, Mr. Growler, which, as you seem to admire it, I regret."

"Well," I continued, "all I can say of the thing is, that it reached me in a mysterious manner, from an unknown hand, and I wish much to know who it is that takes such an interest in my monetary affairs, as to send me so handsome a receptacle for them."

Julia was silent, and for a moment we were embarrassed. In truth, we were both disappointed. I was at least, inasmuch as I had lost the opportunity of speaking, "like a father" to the young lady, and giving her some wholesome general advice, which I had rummaged out for the occasion: and I fancied Julia was hurt, or annoyed, at my having broached the subject. It seemed to me that I had already gone too far; and that it would be quite useless to ask any further questions. After a turn or two through the garden, we returned to the house, both rather *solemn and meditative*. I retreated to my own room,

and heard, as I fancied, Julia ascend the stairs and repeat my example.

Undaunted by this first repulse, and prompted by curiosity, I still resolved to sound Emily on the subject of the presents, and soon an opportunity for doing so occurred.

We were pic-nic-ing with a very delightful party, in Windsor forest. We had had music and dancing on the turf. We had listened to songs and jokes, and toasted one another under the cool green dim shadows of the venerable trees, those leafy old patriarchs of the forest; we had feasted and made merry, and now, as the dusky evening began faintly to gather upon us from the horizon, we all went off spontaneously, in little knots of twos and threes, to take a sober farewell of the delicious spot, where we had celebrated a most happy day; to relax after the merriment and laughter, which had been indulged almost to surfeit, and perhaps to gather fresh energies, that our ride home might not be altogether dull and spiritless. The two sisters, with myself and another companion, sauntered into an inviting glade, and the ghostly quiet of the scene seemed well to correspond with our now sobering spirits. The conversation, at first general as we walked on in a line, soon grew more interesting to Julia and her partner, who becoming more and more absorbed, imperceptibly advanced away from us, and presently wandered out of sight altogether. Emily and I were talking, at first of anything, everything, or nothing by turns, philosophizing on the delights of country pursuits, the dullness of town life, the beau-

ties of forest scenery, and the characteristics of our various companions for the day. Suddenly, however, Emily perceived a modest little flower, which arrested her attention, and drew from her an exclamation of pleasure.

"Oh! what a sweet flower. I must have it"—and forthwith she stooped and culled the pretty gem. It was a lily of the valley. After admiring it, she turned to me:

"I am so fond of wild flowers, they have such a charming simplicity; and they appear to have all the more beauty from the modesty with which they grow in quiet nooks, or under solemn trees, or in the homely tangled hedgerows. I love the pretty wild flowers."

"But," remarked I, very pointedly, "if you were about to send a token of love, you would select a rose, would you not, in preference to a lily?"

"No, indeed," responded she ardently "it should be a lily of the valley. I should present it as a type of purity, simplicity, and modesty; the three graces which best adorn our sex, and which, as far as my imperfections admitted, I should endeavour to realize in myself. Besides, it rhymes with my own name too, Milly—lily. That gives me an affection for it even—but you look serious."

"Oh! no.—I thought the rose was your favourite flower, and I fancied that you had once given me a rose"—

"Perhaps I have—often, but then that might have been because I could not find a lily," and she laughed, *and joyously* continued, "Will you put this in your

coat? It is a pretty ornament on a gentleman's coat—allow me ;” and she engaged upon the task of adjusting the flower in sundry of the button holes, I having been at the moment so abstracted, as not to have heeded her first offer of it.

“But,” said I presently, “do you offer me this flower as a type and covenant?” and as I put the question, I looked grave, and anxiously expectant for her answer.

A thrill pervaded her frame as she turned round her happy laughing face to mine, and a pause ensued, while the sorrows of my heart clouded my face and moistened my eyes. Emily grew pale, looked sad and wild, and, without warning, fell inanimate at my feet. Good heavens! it was an awful moment for me. She had fainted, and we were alone—without assistance and probably waited for.

But there was no time for reflection. I hastened to raise poor Emily and fan her with my handkerchief. She fortunately recovered quickly, but no sooner had a sigh and a glance betokened the return of life than a gush of tears threatened worse consequences than the former syncope. Either the inevitable avowal, which had been perhaps unintentionally and precipitately conveyed, or the unexpected disappointment and hopelessness in which it had resulted, affected her so deeply, that for a time her faculties were benumbed. By the most gentle remonstrances and the kindest sympathy with her “illness,” which I insisted was “the result of an overstrained gaiety during the day, combined with the warmth and sultriness of the weather,”

I at last succeeded in bringing her to a more tranquil state ; and as she was wiping away the still extolling tears, and taking my arm to rejoin our party, we heard a distant " Holloa," which I immediately suggested must be for us. Emily, hearing the shout, and my exhortation, roused herself still more and shook off her lethargy by abruptly saying,—

"What will you think of me, Mr. Growler, for such an exhibition of weakness? I can never forgive myself."

"Pardon me, Miss Emily, but I am fully sensible that it is myself who must appear to the greatest disadvantage in this incident—but it is sacred with me. I cannot, dare not, speak further on the subject now ; yet, believe me, I shall never fail to remember this as one of the 'white days' of my life."

"May I then beg of you never to recur to this subject before me?"

I promised compliance, but begged her to tell me if she had never sent me a rose as a souvenir. She avowed that she had not, and I was satisfied with the truth of her assertion. But my perplexities were increased manifold. What was the meaning of the world in which I was living? If the simplicity of retirement and a secluded life, enervated and threatened me with death from inanition, the complexity of the life I had accepted in exchange seemed to promise consequences almost as fatal from excitement and attrition.

I forget how we encountered our friends, or the many sallies and smartnesses with which they greeted us. *I forget the particulars of our return home, and of the*

time that intervened between my arrival there and my retirement for the night. I remember the wearisome restlessness, the despondency, the cruel tortures of that terrible night. I remember vividly even now my wild delirious dreams of "Dulcinea" and "shipwrecks." I remember the curdling laughter of the evil genius over my pillow, and the monotonous dirge-like chant he was singing in my ears without cessation,

"He that keeps nor crust nor crum,
Weary of all, shall want some."

X.

I was now most disagreeably compromised, unhappy again myself, and blighting as usual the neighbourhood in which I settled. The smile after the Black Beetle Tragedy, and the ardent abstracted gaze of Emily on the same occasion ; the earnestness of her desire to know if she might be a trifle and be loved ; the insinuation of Lizzy, now formed collateral and decisive evidences of a feeling in the young lady which up to the moment of its abrupt revelation I had hardly suspected. It is impossible for a man to make such a discovery as I had made, without being deeply affected by it. To find himself singled out from the general mass, and made the object of attention and solicitude, is so gratifying to a man's self-love, such a homage to the human nature of which he has been before only a positive individual expression, and has now become superlative, that it is dangerous in its effects. From the fact that there is not instilled by education into men, a sufficiently high intellectual tone to appreciate such discoveries at their proper value, it happens that we have constantly imported into society an amount of evitable misery and ruin, which is truly terrible to contemplate. My idea had always been, that if a man should at any time be so fortunate *as to discover* really a feeling of affection manifested

for himself, that it was his duty as a man to reciprocate such feeling ; generosity, if not love of approbation, would prompt so much, and the ritual, and an establishment, would follow as a matter of course. But I had never been able to inspire Dulcinea with these notions, and seemed as far from such an accomplishment as ever. Emily was a sweet girl, and at almost any time before my residence at the cottage, I would have given my head and ears for such an avowal as had but now come from her.

But what was my position now ? I absolutely recoiled from contemplation of the subject. I felt my destiny to depend on the resolutions of another, who as far as I could judge was totally indifferent to my welfare, and whose indifference exaggerated affection into positive infatuation. To forget Dulcinea and reciprocate to Emily would be impossible ; to love one and engage with the other, equally so ; and to change, if it could be done, would show such volatility and unsteadiness, that I felt I should be worthy of neither, loathsome to myself. Constancy I must have ; and although an oracular instinct seemed to warn both Emily and myself of hopelessness and despair, nevertheless I felt bound to satisfy my mind with adherence to the abstract principle, rather than yield to the impulses of my heart, which would have undoubtedly plunged me into greater perplexities than I already suffered.

I came down in the morning, feeling more as though I had been originally manufactured in Millwall than created after the usual manner of flesh and blood ; as

though I were made up of cranks, axles, and pivots of iron rather than nerves, bones, and muscles. I felt rusty and there was no oil that suited my complaint. Like Hamlet "I could accuse me of such things that it were better my mother had not borne me; with more offences at my back than I have thoughts to put them in, imagination to give them shape, or time to act them in: what should fellows such as I do, crawling between earth and heaven? We are arrant knaves all!" Muddy-pated and bilious, I could form no resolutions, lay down no principles. Life was once more reduced from a system to a medley hotch-potch; and I was a deserted wreck tossing about on the waves of chance, with binnacle and rudder and tackle complete, but without an intelligence to guide me in my course.

But there are many events in our lives which are too ridiculous to publish, and many realities in every experience which are too great exaggerations ever to be believed by others. Who that knows me would credit these adventures of a Hermit, would credit the situation in which I was now involved, without possibility of avoidance, almost without hope of disentanglement? Yet so it was. I who had cultivated solitude and buried myself in congenial retirement, till I had acquired the manner of a student, and the character of "an abstracted brain-raker," or of "an amiable bear soured by indigestion"—I who had not feasted and danced after the manner of men, but had lived at a distance as it were away from the world; no sooner do I step out of my "den" and set foot in this same *world*, with a gentle heart as the object of my chivalrous

pilgrimage, than I am rudely met by an obstruction which it seemed impossible to overcome. The gentle heart, my lamp of life and guiding star, my object, dimly looming in the distance, yet drew my gaze and my hopes and faith, with an invincible attraction towards it ; but now to make another step forward in the pursuit I must crush, must destroy. A phalanx of hearts was opposed to my further passage, and without wounds given or received I could not move.

The discovery came on me like a peal of thunder, or like the overwhelming crush of an avalanche, or an earthquake. Such an anguish corroded my heart—such a delirium suffused my brain, that I was never thoroughly conscious of the course of events during some days after my terrible scene with Emily. I was confined to my couch, and tended by the whole family with the most delicate care. The overstrain of excitement benumbed, and I have a recollection only of reviving after an unknown interval, and finding my friends surrounding me with looks of gratification, at the returning consciousness expressed in my eyes. A glance at the faces, and round the room, satisfied me that I had been ill, and that nurture and attention had been lovingly bestowed upon me. Gratitude rose in my heart, and I smiled upon the group around me. I shook hands with Mrs. Scrabster, and then took a hand of each of the young ladies. I tried to utter my thanks, but to my surprise found the loudest tone left me, was an almost inaudible whisper. I was desired by the doctor, who stood at the foot of the bed, to remain quiet, and he motioned the company

to depart, now that the crisis of my malady had passed favourably. I clung to the hands joined in mine however, which seemed to return my feeble pressure ardently; and I entreated with a look that the momentary happiness I felt, might not be too rudely or so soon broken. I was indulged and soon swam away into a kind of happy swooning sleep.

As I woke again refreshed, Julia softly entered the room. "Oh," said she, "how happy I am to see you so much better; we are all delighted. Mamma, who is your chief nurse, will return directly."

Hardly heeding what she said, I anxiously looked in her face and remarked, "So you did really send me that elegant purse."

"Hush! hush! you are on forbidden ground. Do not think upon that subject yet."

"I will not," I replied, "but set me at rest upon it. I am mystified, and the only chance for rest is to be properly informed of my position."

"Yes, yes, only remain quiet. You require rest; but you have talked wildly, and when you are better you shall know all."

The nurse-in-chief entered the room and stopped further conversation. I was however restless and anxious upon the subject I had started, the one uppermost in my mind at the moment of my recovery. It seemed to me that I had discovered the existence of a series of attachments for myself in the family which I had never anticipated, and which had so affected me as to deprive me of consciousness; but the *matter was so* involved in obscurity, that I could not

distinctly say whether I had really experienced this trial or whether it was but a dream. Mrs. Scrabster announced to me that Lizzy wished to remain with me during the night ; and as she felt very tired and should be glad of a night's rest, if I had no objection she would leave me in Lizzy's charge that night. I assented to the proposition of course, and with a great deal of pleasure, as I looked forward to gaining from Lizzy's pliant disposition an explanation of the mysteries by which I was surrounded.

The family having therefore in due time retired to rest, Lizzy was established in my chamber to watch the patient and minister to his wants. I beckoned her to my side, and begged of her in order that I might sleep to tell me what had happened to me, and how it was that I found myself in bed and unable almost to move.

"Oh" said Lizzy, "nobody is to tell you what has happened, but I am sure you have nearly frightened us all to death. What poor creatures we are to be sure, and how soon we are struck down from health, and all that, when anything upsets us ! and yet I am sure that I cannot but admire you all the more for it. It is a sad thing to see a gentleman like you know so little about the ways of this world, and it is very cruel, too. You said you were shut out of heaven, and that heaven was in Kensington, and Mr. Gripsmill had too much influence there, but that if she were Herod's daughter and wanted Gripsmill's head upon a dish, you would give it her. Then you wanted to get up out of bed, and asked for the road that led out of this

world, as you wanted a change and could not see which way to go, for your eyes had been taken out and their places filled with two women's hearts, and a third you were afraid of treading on, and a fourth, the only one you wanted, you could not find any where. I never heard any one go on so as you did, and to see how the young Misses watched by you, and how they cried for you, and listened to you talking about Miss Mookins, and them, and every body else, (meaning Lizzy I strongly suspect) it was quite shocking. Once you said you would call upon the sexton and just make things comfortable, for you sadly wanted rest, but the sexton was not to be found for a long while because he was in a grave, and you said he was always in his grave, and how happy he must be to be doing so well, and how much you would like to change places with him. It was quite horrible, I'm sure—"

"Well but," I interrupted, "what was the beginning, the cause of all this?"

"Well, that I don't rightly know for certain, but as I know how things have been working in the dark for a long time, I can pretty well guess. Do you not recollect being out the best part of the day, and coming home and finding Miss Julia alone reading in the drawing room? It was in the afternoon, and you both walked out for a long time in the garden. What you were talking about of course I don't know, but Miss Julia was dreadfully ill-tempered for the rest of the day, eat no dinner and went to her room early, and passed half the night in crying, while you went

out to Kensington, I think, and came home very late. You recollect that?"

"Go on," I said.

"Oh! I can't tell you.—I opened the door when you came back, and the first words you said were "Lizzy, the World's on fire." I looked out to see, and said it was nonsense. Then you laughed and said, "Yes, nonsense, a joke—everything is a joke—the world's a joke; and then you whispered in my ear the last serious thing you ever meant to say, and you said if you ever married anybody it would be me, if I loved you, and then you laughed and went wildly up stairs; and next morning instead of coming down as usual you were found insensible under the bed. I'm sure, Mr. Growler, I've been very unhappy about you indeed." And then Lizzy wiped her eyes with her handkerchief.

XI.

One of the greatest afflictions incident to human organization, undoubtedly, is indecision. It is not always synonymous with want of resolution and moral cowardice, as is commonly imagined, but is rather to be attributed to a clinging love of realities—the present moment and prevailing circumstances which are, in a measure, understood—to a dread of doubts and uncertainties, and a perpetual fear of crisis, and the probabilities of the future, which it is impossible to appreciate. Indecision was the rule of life with me, and it is the nature of man to be subject to the ruling power within him, oppose and battle against it as he may. This temper was encouraged and strengthened by my diabolic friend Monodelph, and was, in great measure, the foundation of much of his horrible pleasantry. There is a certain compensation, doubtless, for this failing, in the amiable *abandon* with which the undecided character gets through the details of life ; but yet, when one comes to reflect upon all the attempts, and the manifold beginnings which have proved shortcoming of any object whatsoever, and which make up the life of scraps one has drawled through, then it is that the echoing thunder of the “still small voice” of conscience turns the *milk of the mind* sour, and the effervescing thoughts

rise bitter and poignant in the bosom, and make the man austere, melancholy, and distempered.

The use of "sackcloth and ashes" has long been exploded, and the repentance which they symbolized being nothing more than regret, is now only a weakness, if not so unpleasant, at least quite as illusory in its effects. The best form of repentance now in vogue is, when you have done wrong, to do right by way of expiation, compensation, and improvement; when your sin consists in having done nothing, do something as earnest of amendment and faith. And I have done something—or, at least, shall have done something when this book is complete—and my repentance becomes a service to my reader. "Growler's autobiography" will go forth like the yellow flag, and those who behold the sign will read its meaning of a plague to be shunned; a course of life on which everyone may reflect after perusal and apostrophize himself—"Go thou and do *un*-likewise." That "tide, which, taken at the flood," has rolled by me often and again—has even wet my soles—but I had never learned to swim, and dared not trust myself to treacherous waves. Opportunities of success have escaped me; ambition has tempted, and fame and fortune hovered in the air, but I had no wings to fly, and could not navigate the uncertain wind. Though my castles are all in the air, and I have most agonizing corns, I am still satisfied to grope about the earth in unconsoling boots, and leave the administration of my manorial rights, like an absentee landlord, to some resident functionary. Bosphorus Cottage is, metaphorically,

a milestone, which marks the culminating point of my career. Arrived so far on a journey of disappointments, I had fondly hoped for respite and entertainment, but all I had was unsatisfying, even noxious ; I was disappointed in everything—my hopes, joys, aspirations, and aims ; in my love—even in my indifference—and my life altogether.

Dulcinea had declared to me, as a friend interested in her welfare, that she was about to be married to “my friend,” Mr. Gripsmill—a consummation I should certainly have prevented if my fingers could, at the moment, have come in contact with his offensive throat. He was absent, however, and I was saved the remorse of a homicide, to go home and tell Lizzy the world was on fire and life was a joke, which I would prove by marrying her, if I married at all. This was the disappointment of my love.

Lizzy was as affectionate as she dared to be, and the feelings of the young ladies were constantly, though carefully and secretly displayed in a manner impossible to be mistaken. Here was the disappointment of my indifference. The result of the two was the disappointment in everything—the *bouleversement*, mental and bodily ; which had commenced in an eccentric disposition to insensibility under the bed, and thence had accumulated a prolonged illness and an intemperate doctor’s bill.

I was now an emaciated invalid, suffering less from any malady which had affected me than from the tremendous remedies which had been applied in mitigation. It is the doctrine of medicine that a remedy

must be more powerful than the disease which it has to counteract, consequently, if the force of disease weakens the frame, the combined forces of remedy and disease naturally reduce the unfortunate patient to the very brink of extinction. If he is fortunate enough to endure through the contention, by having a constitution stronger than the assailants, the doctor—having put to flight his enemy by the very artful agency of drugs—turns to diet, air, and exercise to recover his patient from the treatment of his friends. This was just my predicament. I felt very much like a country which has suffered the ravages of two contending armies—like Belgium, for instance, after the battle of Waterloo. One foreign power had entered to destroy, and another came to save. They had both ravaged and devastated wherever they had marched. They fought till they were exhausted, one power decamped and the other presently evacuated, but I was left full of ruins and slaughter. The time and trouble necessary to recover from the effects of the strife were infinitely greater than those requisite for precipitating me into the quarrel ; but I was in the hands of my friends, and my recovery was progressing as favourably as could be wished. The ministration I received, too, was of a loving sort—soothing and delightful in experience, though punishing sadly in reaction ; yet it gave such a full happiness to my attendants to wait upon me, to watch and sit with me, that it would have been heartless to meet them with repulses, and cruel, even to speak the truth. I consoled myself in believing that the faces of these and

all women were masks concealing the heart and character of my passion—Dulcinea; and sometimes losing myself in this fantasy, talked on as joyously—often with my eyes closed, to shut out the mask and to keep the true face before me—as joyously as though I were in the actual presence of my lost divinity.

It thus happened that before my recovery was consummated I had fallen under three several and solemn engagements. “Absurd!” objects some one. Granted, on my part, unhesitatingly, and to the full extent of the term—nevertheless true and inevitable. All women were to me but one. I was only thrice engaged to Dulcinea, and even if once each to three Dulcineas they had dictated it so for their own happiness, and why should I carp and cavil at their conclusions, and selfishly insist on having my personal convenience consulted in the matter? True, they acted independently of each other, and I in concert with all; but I could no more have prevented this hymeneal plexus than I could have saved myself from being born. The *delice* of the moment was too sweet—too complete—to admit of a single reflection on the future, and by the carelessness and inertness of indecision I was complicated in a pleonasm of affection, and committed to a sequel it would have been impossible to realize.

Thus runs the tenor of the history, however, and having started with the full intention to “make a clean breast of it,” I cannot now shrink before the *confession* of my crimes. Biography is only useful as

a guide and finger-post, pointing for all of us to know, "This way to Castle Dangerous"—"That way to Point Despair"—and, "The other road to Botany Bay." What is to be the particular inscription on this finger-post I leave critics to determine. I have hinted at my own opinion, and, no doubt, they will be sufficiently complaisant to defer to that, without any remarks or hesitation, and I pass on to sum up rapidly the events which terminated my present adventure.

It was a remarkable circumstance that in my chubby youth (for I was chubby then), when I was a frolicsome and mischievous school-boy, I had once dared to worry an old fortune-telling gipsy. Like other children, at the time, I was taught to entertain a fear and aversion for these wandering outcasts, and the appearance one day of this itinerant Cleopatra in our play-ground, who no doubt under the pretence of conjuring and telling our fortunes for pence, was taking a survey of the premises for quite other purposes, was the signal for me to become the ringleader of a faction determined upon her immediate ejection. We succeeded in our object, and were triumphantly hooting our last farewells as she marched out of the gate, when she suddenly darted round, and, pouncing upon me, the foremost of the party, held me by the sleeve and gibbered some unknown words in my face, and scowling with terrible import pointed with her gristly finger to my forehead, saying, emphatically, "The gibbet, the gibbet—little fool! You are bold, and can beat a weak old woman like me, but you'll die of

a stiff neck—you'll be hung!" and then laughing hideously, just as Monodelph laughed in these later days, she bounced away, leaving me and my companions considerably chap-fallen, brave as we were, at the denunciation and unpleasant prophecy which she had vented upon me. This prediction occasionally haunted my repose, and though I had now forgotten it for a long while, it occurred very forcibly to me one morning just before the doctor had favoured me with the last of his visits.

This doctor I several times suspected of a design to reduce me to a state of permanent income for his own behoof, though perhaps I greatly wronged the amiable man by such an imputation. I thought my recovery very long, however, though I must confess it was by no means, on the whole, disagreeable. But, really, I could not conceal from myself that matters were beginning to assume a very serious aspect, and on this particular morning the prophecy of the Egyptian flashed across my memory, and startled me by its peculiar pertinency to my present situation; for I was liable to be called upon, at any moment, to commit bigamy, nay, trigamy—polygamy itself, perhaps, in a christian country, where I myself was one of the "party of order." That prophecy really seemed to have a deep meaning and probability in it. I scrutinized my forehead in the mirror, vaguely expecting to recognise the palpable impression of a gallows, but the wrinkles and the crimples there did not delineate any such figure more than usual, and I felt there *might* be a hope for me yet.

But the time for action had really come, and I must do something, or a fulfilment of the prophecy appeared little less than certain.



XII.

By way of making preparations for a change, I went as early as possible to pay a visit to Mr. Mottleman, my tenant in Gray's Inn, proposing to settle up the rent, which had accumulated considerably, and to give notice of my intention to resume the occupancy of the floor for myself. I was too late, however, and my call proved useless and superfluous. The man had bolted, and had not only never intimated his intention to me, but had, moreover, turned all the property on the premises into money, to facilitate the execution of his ultimate designs. This was a very cruel and ungentlemanly proceeding it seemed to me, especially as I had, throughout, trusted him with a frankness and cordiality which were by no means deserved. When the man gave me as references, a solicitor of long standing, who had known his family for years, and a west-end surgeon, living in a leading thoroughfare and doing a splendid practice, who was his intimate friend, delicacy, of course, prompted me to say "that was quite sufficient;" and, fully satisfied that a man who could give such references must be everything I could wish, I forbore to make any enquiries. But now, finding myself victimised, I proceeded to look up these gentlemen and, naturally enough, procured no information which could mitigate my position. The soli-

citor announced to me that the young man had fallen into vicious habits and excesses, which had resulted in his ruin. He had been dismissed in disgrace by his family and had, doubtless, fled the country for ever, having been outlawed for considerable debts. The surgeon was a heavy creditor for money lent, and I was left *sans* rent and *sans* furniture.

This circumstance altered my views as well as gave me an idea. Mottleman had at least cut the knot of one set of difficulties, present ones, by avoiding the scene of action. My resolve was to do the same. Plainly I could not return to Gray's Inn. My resources were too slender to enable me to reinstate myself as before. The recollections of the sufferings I had experienced there were still vivid, and I felt it would be too near Paddington and the Scrabsters for my peace of mind. The memory of Mottleman would be ever present; the thoughts of Gripsmill, the train of ideas which his name suggested, and its odious connection with Dulcinea, were too painful for endurance, and determined me to some other course rather than a return to the solitude of the Inn.

But to break the news of this resolve to the inmates of the cottage would be impossible. I felt quite indisposed and quite unequal, to encounter the scenes which such an announcement would necessarily provoke. As yet everything remained in suspense, and the only method of avoiding the crisis, which in the nature of things must ensue if I remained, was to precipitate another, and leave circumstances to settle themselves without my presence or interference.

But in this case I should be obliged to leave my boxes and their contents behind, as a sort of delusive pledge of my return. In any way a change involved pecuniary as well as other serious considerations, yet upon mature deliberation this total and continental change, minus the usual travelling incommmodity of luggage, seemed altogether the most reliable.

The arrangements not being very complicated or extensive, were all the more readily completed, and it was not many days after the ratification of the solemn treaty in which I had engaged towards myself, that I was sailing pleasantly down the Thames in the "Baron Osy," for Antwerp, intending to visit Brussels and accomplish a pedestrian tour through the Rhine country and into Switzerland before my return. After leaving the cottage, without an adieu and without having excited a suspicion, I dropped a letter in the post to signify my intention of not returning, and requested that my property might be taken care of until application were made for it. I thus escaped from the entanglements and miseries which had so long overwhelmed me, and started on a tour, which promised novelties and pleasures never to be attained in London; ease and relaxation to the mind, tortured with the turmoil of a great and busy city, and the discord and anarchy of all its social misregulations.

* * * *

It was a happy time of three months that was occupied by my trip, and I turned my steps homeward more reconciled to the conflicts of life, from the beautiful contrast with which they illustrated the

divine repose of nature. Meditation, even in the rude sanctuary, amongst the jostling tombs of a cemetery, assures us that the sequel of life is desirable, as an eternal tranquillity is preferable to the turbid tumult in which society involves us all. Life is the art of reasoning in action, and every period elevates us towards the climax. The acts and thoughts of men, year by year concentrate themselves towards one inevitable conjunction ; and, at some part of his existence, it is the reflection of every man, "In the midst of life we are in death." I wandered on musingly amid the sepulchral groves of Père la Chaise, and, turning suddenly round a corner, came upon a group in which I recognized two well-known figures—one rekindled the smouldering embers of all my hatreds and aversions, the other brightened the recollection of my love and reverence. The union of the two reminded me of all my suffering and misfortune ; but the time, the place, the current of previous reflection, all pronounced an emphatic forgiveness and oblivion. When, therefore, the ringing voice of Gripsmill announced his recognition of me—"Ah ! Growler, my dear boy, *delighted* to meet with you once more," I accepted his cordial salute with pleasure, and hardly winced under the presentation to Dulcinea as his wife.

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Dulcinea made a splendid wife to my quondam tormentor, and I lived to see it. He reformed his early extravagances, made an exemplary husband and father ; and has been long buried in the sweet obscurity of a country practice, happy and prosperous.

X

Exactly as in the first instance I had divined Dulcinea's excellent qualifications to be, did they prove ; and the oftener I hear of her family, or visit their delightful residence, the more do I repine for the past, and the more irreparable is my loss in the future. But time has mellowed down the torments of the trial, and has reconciled me in some degree to the loneliness of my solitary position, so that I can regard this passage now, as one fraught with benefit to mental health, and prolific of ideas and sentiments ; which, had it not occurred, might probably never have been tested in my experience. On the whole, therefore, I was a gainer, for though, at first, I could reckon no more than that I had gained the loss of Dulcinea, I afterwards reasoned further, and found, undoubtedly, that had I pursued any other course than the one I actually travelled, I should have lost a gain of many valuable inspirations, which I fondly cherish as the dearest and divine tokens of human nature. "What does the man know," says the prophet, "who has never suffered?"

* * * *

I never again saw my old friends of Bosphorus Cottage. A visit there would have been a trial which I never could have mustered up sufficient courage to encounter. I was indebted to Gripsmill for the service of recovering my property. He paid a visit to Mrs. Scrabster on my behalf, and repeated the assurances, which I had personally and often given while there, of my deep gratitude for the kindness and amiable attention I had received during my residence ; but, as

might naturally have been expected, Mrs. Scrabster displayed considerable severity and dignity in her deportment and language to the exponent of my sentiments, and hardly remarked more than that, "to say the least of it, Mr. Growler had manifested his gratitude in an exceedingly strange and eccentric manner.

We are all fond of tracing the individualities with which, in the course of life, we come in contact, to their end; and I have been curious to learn the catastrophe of the Scrabster family in the great drama of action, where we all play insignificant parts for the development of the great poem of nature. I learned with regret that Emily, the beautiful rose of the Scrabster garden, fell into a decline, and died at an early age. It seems that the very creatures we would exalt as types, and realizations of the ideal of our nature, and would perpetuate on earth in eternal youth and beauty, are too fragile and sensitive for the planet which they transciently adorn, and the nature they involuntarily assume; how else is it that the beautiful and the virtuous die young? Julia remains at home with mamma to this day, and Lizzy, by my last accounts, after having left the family for some time, had returned, and is still to be found in her original and congenial situation. Tom has grown into a young man of business habits, and follows steadfastly in the paternal footsteps; though, at his age, he can hardly be expected to read the *Times* with so much interest as his father, yet he places quite as much faith in it; and is quite content, at present, that government and politics, and everything

else, should be left to the criticisms of that journal and the astute approbation of his father, so long as he can enjoy his cigars, and his boating, and his cricketing, and the general indulgence of his rather "fast" propensities and diversions, undisturbed. Mr. and Mrs. Scrabster remain *in statu quo*—she preserves the same dignity—he the same amiable, punctilious, business-like character, as at first; but their resources have somewhat improved, and I never heard of their venturing upon the trial of another lodger.

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The episode is complete—its moral obvious. Beware of cold colander like chambers, which may drive you to extremities, and develop a proclivity to intricacies and difficulties. Beware of trusting dreams, which encourage too much hope and plunge into the despair of "hopes deferred," which make the heart sick. Beware of seeking for Bosphorus Cottage, when you have already settled your affections down in Kensington; there is no knowing what it may lead to, and for the soul which only seeks rest, it were better that such scenes and experiences were never encountered, even though they do improve and advance us. The cost to the heart and the mind is too great; for no trials, no endurances, not even pleasures and affections can change the character that is innate and essential to us. Human nature we receive, and reason we gain by learning or experience; but through all the reason we come back to ourselves, and notwithstanding it we *remain* as before; we live on and gain wisdom it is *true*, and try many methods of life perhaps, from re-

ceiving new information, yet in every change we can recognise ourselves, and we feel sensibly our own identity in every phase of our existence. Hence it is that at this moment I am only a wiser and a sadder man, for all my experience of Bosphorus Cottage, altered in style, and I fear for the worse in appearance, yet I still remain the student and the solitaire as before ; but instead of being known as " a bear " I am now called, affectionately,

GROWLER,

The Hermit.

(The end.)





